EXCLUSIVE READERS' Q&A: Jonny Milner

Why the double British rally champ is not done with competition – just yet P14

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Multi-year deal with Excelr8 Trade Price Cars Racing for Independent tin-top star

TOM INGRAM JOINS HYUNDAI ATTACK FOR 2021 BTCC CAMPAIGN

Ingram has long-term aim for BTCC crown

Ingram will front Hyundai's attack in this year's BTCC

By Matt James

Tom Ingram will race a Hyundai i30 Performance N Fastback in this year's British Touring Car Championship after securing a multi-season deal with the ambitious Excelr8 Trade Price Cars squad.

The 27-year-old will spearhead a four-car attack for the expanding team, which is an amalgamation of Excelr8 Motorsport and Trade Price Cars Racing crews for 2021. Ingram, a two-time Independents Trophy winner, said he was thrilled by the new agreement, which will make its debut in the delayed start to the 2021 BTCC at Thruxton on May 8-9.

Sixteen-time race winner Ingram said: "We've got the right people in the right places – from the engineering side to the design and team management – to do the best job possible. The Hyundai has developed significantly over the past year, and it goes without saying that there's a lot more potential – and pace – still to be extracted."

Excelr8 team owner Justina Williams said: "[Tom] is a proven race winner and title winner, so he will inevitably be a huge asset to our team and will continue to push us towards the sharp end of the BTCC grid."

BTCC news special, p5

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT MOTORSPORT NEWS

PREVIEW

THE WRC IS BACK!

The Brits who are aiming to turn up the heat on Ogier in 2021

THE LINE-UP, THE EVENTS, THE NEW TEAM BOSS AND THE THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE NEW SEASON, STARTS PAGE 18

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COMMENT

Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey, Hyundai

The cars haven't had much time to rest since the Monza Rally at the end of last season

ALL SET FOR A BATTLE ROYALE

It seems like the engines have hardly had time to cool down since they were switched off following the final round of the 2020 World Rally Championship at Monza in December. The rejigged calendar meant that the competitors were putting themselves to the test right up until the cusp of Christmas, but now they are ready to get going again.

In Motorsport News this week Elfyn Evans tells us that getting straight back on the horse is of no concern to him as he seeks in 2021 to go one better on his narrow missing out on a maiden crown last term.

The Toyota man will go right back into battle with World champion and team-mate Sebastien Ogier, the sister Yaris WRC of Kalle Rovanpera and the rest to prove that the performances he was able to pull out during 2020 – which included a breath-taking win on Rally Sweden – were no flash in the pan.

It is clear to those who look closely that the campaign he enjoyed last year was another chapter in his book of learning. His three-podium 2020 campaign was his best-yet season. The progress is easy to trace. And now that learning has been done, and he knows what it is like to build a title-challenging assault, that is a box ticked. There is only one more to tick. Sure, it is the biggest one of all, but it is well within both his capabilities and his grasp in 2021.

Graham Lister speaks to Evans, and M-Sport's Briton Gus Greensmith, in our extensive preview to the World Rally Championship, which starts on page 18.

One of Evans's predecessors as a British Rally Championship title winner, Jonny Milner, is the subject of our readers' Q&A this week. For so many years, the straight-talking Yorkshireman was the benchmark on the national scene, the one that the up-and-comers would have to measure themselves against. In typical Milner style, he pulls no punches as he speaks to Luke Barry about his successful career behind the wheel which he assures us is not over.

Barry and Graham Keilloh tackle the thorny subject of the new Brexit regulations too. Freight truckers aren't the only ones who will have to embrace a new way of crossing borders from now on, and we look at the new protocols and the potential pitfalls facing competitors who want to go on the hunt for silverware outside these shores.

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Title-winning rally man takes on MN posers from the public

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Why the WRC is an open book in 2021

We look ahead to the opening round of the World Rally Championship

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How Brexit will hit competitors

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RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

F1 agrees Bahrain test
Formula 1's stakeholders have agreed to run 2021's pre-season test in Bahrain on March 12-14. The three-day test was expected to be held at Barcelona in Spain on March 2-4, however with Bahrain becoming the season-opener's host after Australia's postponement teams agreed Sakhir was the logical test venue.

Interlagos contract suspended
Formula 1's recently announced five-year deal with the new promoter of Interlagos's Sao Paulo Grand Prix has been temporarily suspended by a local judge. The move is due to a legal challenge over the use of public funds in securing the deal and its level of transparency.

McLaren signs FE option
McLaren has signed an option to join Formula E's Gen3 era beginning in 2022. Audi and BMW's forthcoming FE exits free up two vacancies on the grid. The deal does not guarantee that McLaren will enter FE, but does ensure it an entry.

Albon gets DTM Ferrari
Alex Albon and Red Bull junior Liam Lawson are poised to race Ferrari 488 GT3s in DTM this year. It was announced earlier this month that Albon will complete a DTM part-campaign this year in a Red Bull-backed team after being dropped from its F1 squad, with Lawson doing a full season.

W Series pre-season test
The W Series will hold a five-day pre-season test at Valencia's Circuit Ricardo Tormo on April 26-30, with all drivers on 2020's roster to take part. This will be the first on-track running for the all-female single-seater championship since the its 2020 season was ditched due to Covid.

Merc chief Hubbert dies
Motorsport News is saddened to report that former Mercedes executive Jurgen Hubbert has died at the age of 81. Hubbert played an important role in returning the marque to motorsport following its long hiatus after 1955's Le Mans disaster.

RENAULT CONFIRMS ALPINE SHAKE UP AMID F1 UNCERTAINTY

Renault's racing restructure confirmed but there's F1 management confusion

Photos: Alpine, Motorsport Images, Renault Sport, Toyota Gazoo Racing, Jakob Ebrey

By Graham Keilloh

Renault has confirmed the reorganisation of its racing activities under the Alpine brand, but there was confusion around its Formula 1 management personnel for 2021.

Renault announced last September it would rebrand its F1 team as Alpine for '21 as part of a wider reorganisation. The Alpine name has significant heritage in rallying and endurance racing, taking overall Le Mans victory in 1978.

Detailing the company's new 'Renaulution' strategy in Paris last week, Renault confirmed that the current activities of Alpine cars, Renault Sport Cars and Renault Sport Racing will be united under the Alpine brand.

However many details about the F1 team's leadership structure were not confirmed at the launch. Ex-Suzuki MotoGP boss Davide Brivio's expected recruitment was not mentioned, though it has been confirmed since that he will become racing director. Executive director Marcin Budkowski's anticipated move to become hands-on boss was unconfirmed as MN went to press. While shortly before the Renaulution unveil, Renault also confirmed in a surprise move that F1 team principal Cyril Abiteboul is departing the organisation *(see separate story)*.

The full launch of the F1 car, called the A521, will take place next month. Teaser images were revealed of the car in an interim black testing livery with red, white and blue – reflecting French and British flags – at the tail. The black is in homage to the company's first grand prix prototype from 1975. Alpine's plans for a new fully-electric sportscar designed in collaboration with Lotus were also outlined at the launch.

Glimpse of Alpine's 2021 F1 car shown

Alpine was part of '78 Le Mans victory

IMOLA BACK ON REVISED F1 CALENDAR

F1 cars returned to Imola last year, and will again in '21

Imola is back on Formula 1's latest calendar for 2021 while Australia's and China's rounds are postponed in Covid pandemic-related revisions.

F1's previous 23-round schedule was due to kick off in Melbourne with Shanghai as round three. However amid the ongoing pandemic the Australian visit is postponed to November 21 while China's stop-off is postponed to an unconfirmed date, with it understood its reinstatement requires another round's cancellation.

On the revised 23-race calendar, Imola's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix on April 18 becomes round two, following Bahrain's opener. A May 2 TBC slot is expected to be filled by the Algarve circuit.

F1 president Stefano Domenicali said: "The global pandemic has not yet allowed life to return to normal, but we showed in 2020 that we can race safely as the first international sport to return and we have the experience and plans in place to deliver on our season."

Imola, an F1 stop-off from 1980 to 2006, returned last year on F1's heavily Covid-impacted calendar.

Ferrari man Leclerc tests positive for Covid

Ferrari Formula 1 star Charles Leclerc has announced he has tested positive for Covid-19 and is self-isolating at home in Monaco with mild symptoms.

In a social media post, the 23-year-old said: "I am regularly checked according to my team's protocols. Unfortunately, I learned that I have been in contact with a positive case and immediately went into self-isolation. A subsequent test I took came back positive.

"I am feeling OK and have mild symptoms. I will remain in isolation in my home in Monaco in compliance with the regulations set by the local health authorities."

Leclerc is the fifth F1 driver known to have contracted Covid, following Sergio Perez, Lance Stroll and Lewis Hamilton last season, plus Lando Norris recently tested positive while on holiday in Dubai. It is not known where Leclerc contracted the virus, but he is known to have holidayed in Dubai earlier in January.

Leclerc is isolating in Monaco

TOYOTA UNVEILS WEC HYPERCAR

Toyota has unveiled its all-new GR010 HYBRID challenger that will contest the 2021 World Endurance Championship under the hypercar regulations.

The 3.5-litre V6 turbo-powered GR010 HYBRID, a racing version of the upcoming hypercar road car, took 18 months to develop. Reflecting the WEC rules' cost-cutting aims, the car is 162kg heavier and 32% less powerful than its TS050 predecessor, and is expected to be 10 seconds slower lapping Le Mans. Two three-day tests of the new car had been completed prior to its unveiling.

Toyota also confirmed it will defend its WEC drivers' and manufacturers' titles and its Le Mans crown with an unchanged driver line-up for both cars.

The new GR010 hypercar

Team director Rob Leupen said: "It has been a tremendous effort from the team to develop and produce this new car, despite the global circumstances. We are looking forward to this [hypercar] challenge. Balance of performance is something we have not experienced before in WEC but we know from our other projects that it puts the emphasis on fast drivers, perfect operations and optimal strategy."

ABITEBOUL IN SURPRISE RENAULT DEPARTURE

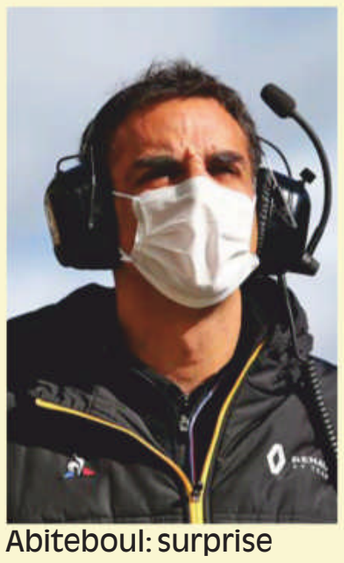
Renault's Formula 1 team principal Cyril Abiteboul in a surprise move has left the manufacturer ahead of its Alpine restructure for the 2021 season.

Abiteboul had been expected in the shake-up to move into a new role within the company. Instead Laurent Rossi has been appointed as Alpine CEO, reporting directly to Renault CEO Luca de Meo.

Executive director Marcin Budkowski is expected to replace Abiteboul as team principal with ex-Suzuki MotoGP boss Davide Brivio coming in as racing director, though only the latter move was confirmed as MN went to press *(see lead story)*.

Abiteboul thanked the team for trusting him "for many years, particularly with the relaunch and reconstruction of the team since 2016".

He added: "The solid foundations of the racing team and the entities in France and England built, the strategic evolution of the sport towards a more economically sustainable model, and more recently the Alpine project, all point to a very fine trajectory."



Abiteboul: surprise

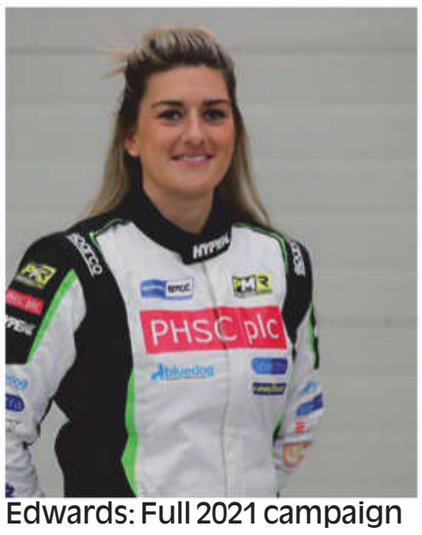
EDWARDS LANDS FULL-SEASON DRIVE WITH BTC RACING

Jade Edwards has completed the line-up for the BTC Racing British Touring Car Championship team for 2021.

She made her BTCC debut in a one-off at Silverstone in 2020 in a Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra and finished two of the three races. She will now join Josh Cook and Michael Crees at the wheel of one of BTC's FK8-spec Honda Civic Type Rs

Edwards, 29, explained: "The plan for that one weekend [in 2020] was always to make it onto the grid full-time. I have worked with the BTCC and BTC Racing over the last year, giving my support and being a real advocate for the team.

"Over the winter, [BTC boss] Steve [Dudman] has been a man of his word, very loyal and trustworthy, and gave me this amazing opportunity – it really is what dreams are made of."



Edwards: Full 2021 campaign

FULL HOUSE FOR THE BTCC IN 2020 SEASON

All 29 of the British Touring Car Championship teams' licences have been allocated for the 2021 season.

Each team needs a TOCA BTCC Licence (TBL) to operate each car in the category. Twenty nine have been issued to existing outfits, with BTCC bosses keeping hold of three as part of its plan to reduce gradually reduce the grid numbers.

BTCC chief executive Alan Gow said: "Although we are going through this most incredibly gruelling period, it's enormous testament to the strength and popularity of the BTCC that we have a full entry. Even more remarkable is the fact that a third of the grid will be in new-build cars that have been constructed in the off-season."

TBL LICENCES

Who has got what?

TEAM	NO. OF TBLS
BMR Racing	1
Boardley Motorsport	2
BTC Racing	3
Ciceley Motorsport	2
Excelr8 Motorsport	2
Aiden Moffat Racing	1
Motorbase Performance	4
Power Maxed Racing	2
Speedworks Motorsport	2
Team Dynamics	2
Team Hard	3
Trade Price Cars Racing	2
West Surrey Racing	3

Photo: Momentum Social, Jakob Ebrey

Ingram has a long-term plan

INGRAM RELISHES MULTI-YEAR DEAL WITH EXCELR8 TRADE PRICE CARS IN BTCC

Double Independents winner to race a Hyundai in 2021 tin-top series

By Matt James

Tom Ingram says that signing a multi-year deal with Excelr8 Trade Price Cars to lead its Hyundai attack on the British Touring Car Championship will help him achieve his aim of lifting the overall crown.

The 27-year-old, a 16-time race winner in the BTCC, says that he clicked with the team after initial discussions and believes that the long-term commitment between him and the squad can unlock the potential of the front-wheel-drive i30 Fastback N Performance.

Excelr8 joined the BTCC as a toe-in-the-water in 2019 before building the South Korean machines for a two-car assault in 2020. The i30 scored a podium finish on its first weekend at Donington Park in August and drivers Senna Proctor and Chris Smiley helped the crew to finish seventh in the teams' standings.

Ingram has stepped away from Speedworks, the team with which he had driven since making his BTCC debut in 2014, for commercial reasons and says he is relishing the new partnership.

The two-time BTCC Independents Trophy winner said: "I spoke to a number of BTCC teams and to be honest, this was probably one of the easiest decisions I've ever had to make. We immediately clicked, right from the very first conversation.

"We've got the right people in the right places – from the engineering side to the design and team management – to do the best job possible, and the massive progress Excelr8 made between their first and second season in the championship underscores just how serious and motivated these guys are."

Ingram said that he had spotted the potential in the Hyundai last season and is confident he will be able to help the combination take the next step into becoming title challengers.

He added: "The Hyundai has developed significantly over the past year, and it goes without saying that there's a lot more potential – and pace – still to be extracted.

"I will be very surprised if we're not a genuine contender for the championship this season – both the Independents title and the main one."

Ingram joins Jack Butel and Northern Irishman Chris Smiley in the team *(see separate story)*.

SMILEY SIGNS ON FOR HYUNDAI BTCC ATTACK

Race-winner Chris Smiley will return to the British Touring Car Championship in 2021 after confirming he will remain with the Excelr8 Trade Price Cars team to handle a Hyundai i30.

Northern Irishman Smiley joined the Excler8 concern in 2020 for the team's maiden year with its newly built i30 and took a podium finish during the car's debut meeting at Donington Park.

The 28-year-old, who first raced in the BTCC in 2016 and won a round at Rockingham in 2018, said: "It's great that the team has put its faith in me once again. This is the first time that I will be going into a second year with an unchanged package since I joined the touring car grid, and that consistency can only be a good thing.

"[In 2020] we showed the potential of the Hyundai, secured a podium finish and were regularly fighting in the points, and I'm feeling positive about what we can achieve this season with everything we were able to learn in 2020."

Jack Butel has already been confirmed alongside Tom Ingram *(see separate story)* and Smiley in what will be an expanded four-car attack following the alliance between Excelr8 Motorsport and Trade Price Cars Racing.

Smiley is back with i30

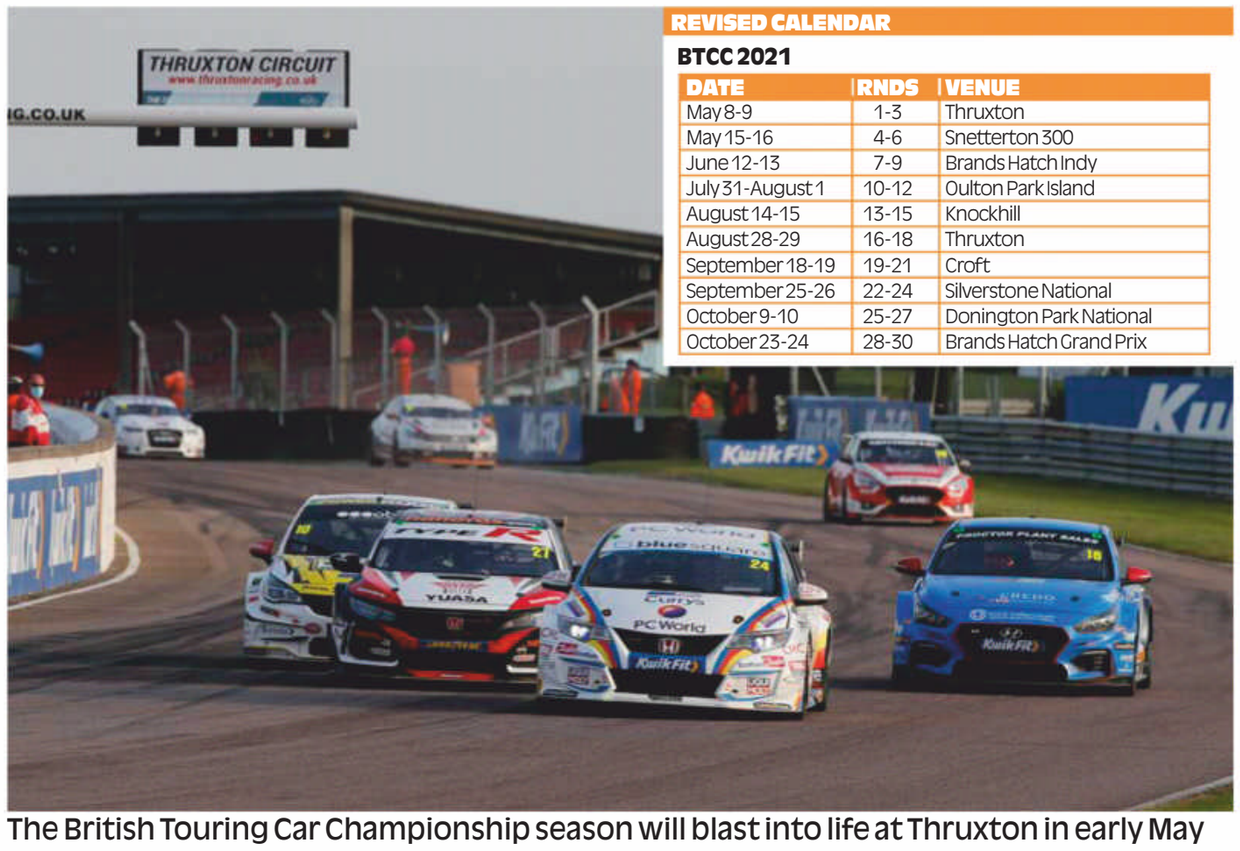
TIN-TOP GREEN LIGHT DELAYED FOR 2021

The start of this year's British Touring Car Championship campaign has been delayed by five weeks in an effort to allow the maximum chance for fans and guests to attend the meetings.

The 30-race schedule was due to kick off at Brands Hatch on April 3-4 but the kick off has been pushed back to Thruxton on May 8-9 amid the ongoing concerns over the global health pandemic.

The series will still run to 10 meetings, but the order has been shuffled around.

The series will still finish as originally planned on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix track, on October 23-24.



The British Touring Car Championship season will blast into life at Thruxton in early May

REVISED CALENDAR

BTCC 2021

DATE	RNDS	VENUE
May 8-9	1-3	Thruxton
May 15-16	4-6	Snetterton 300
June 12-13	7-9	Brands Hatch Indy
July 31-August 1	10-12	Oulton Park Island
August 14-15	13-15	Knockhill
August 28-29	16-18	Thruxton
September 18-19	19-21	Croft
September 25-26	22-24	Silverstone National
October 9-10	25-27	Donington Park National
October 23-24	28-30	Brands Hatch Grand Prix

SPEEDWORKS TO DOUBLE UP FOR MAKES' GLORY

Speedworks Motorsport will run two Toyota Corollas in this year's British Touring Car Championship, as predicted in Motorsport News.

The squad has been in the category since 2011 and has run multiple cars before, but this move will allow it to battle for the manufacturers crown as well as the other contests with two points-paying machines.

Boss Christian Dick said: "It's something we knew needed to happen if we were to have a real shot at winning the Manufacturers' and Teams' championships.

"I cannot wait to see what we can now accomplish with a second Corolla. We had arguably the fastest car in the field towards the end of last season, and we are confident of unlocking even more pace from it [before the start of the year].

"We have a dynamic new driver line-up that will be unveiled soon, representing an exciting blend of youth and experience. We are immensely grateful to Toyota UK for their ongoing support."

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RACING NEWS

Photo: Praga Cars, Jakob Ebrey

Praga has big R1 racing aims

Every panel on the R1 is new

PRAGA UNVEILS ALL-NEW R1 CAR AND TARGETS A ONE-MAKE SERIES

All-carbon racer with 2021 dedicated Britcar class is revealed with "practically every part updated"

By Graham Keilloh

Praga has unveiled its upgraded high-performance R1 that has its own class in 2021's Britcar endurance championship and is set for its own racing series in 2022.

The new R1 succeeds the Praga that last season, run by VR Motorsport, won seven Britcar races from nine plus the title.

The latest lightweight machine, with every body panel new, boasts 15% more downforce and five per cent less drag than its predecessor plus a 50% larger fuel tank.

Engine management software, electronics, front lights plus in-car controls and adjustments are also improved. Its turbocharged two-litre Renault engine produces 365bhp.

Praga's engineering director Jan Martinek said: "Make no mistake, practically every part of the car has been updated or refined to offer drivers the best possible feel."

This year up to 12 Pragas will compete in Britcar's first dedicated Praga category. The first new R1s are now being delivered to UK customers via VR Motorsport.

Praga Cars UK MD Mark Harrison described the R1 as: "dramatic and exciting, accessible, easy to own and run, and dramatic to watch. It is perfect for team owners, novice drivers looking to experience downforce, experienced racers looking to step into LMP-style racing and, importantly, sponsors."

Drivers signed up to race Pragas in Britcar this year include British GT4 title-contender Chris 'Chippy' Wesemael, who will compete with his own CW Performance team alongside Sports 1000 frontrunner Richard Morris, as well as Charlie Martin, Britcar race-winner Jack Fabby, ex-SAS soldier Jay Morton and Fun Cup graduate twins Chris and Ed Bridle.

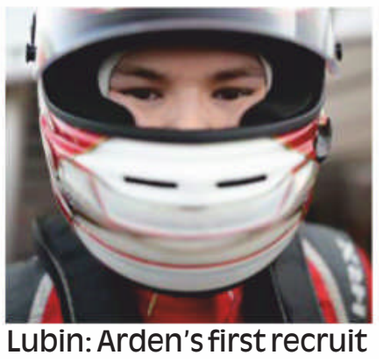
LUBIN IS ARDEN'S FIRST BRITISH F3 RECRUIT

British Formula 4 graduate Frederick Lubin has become Arden Motorsport's first driver signing for its new BRDC Formula 3 effort in 2021.

Lubin, 16, in his freshman single-seater campaign last year competed for Arden in F4 as the latest from the team-affiliated Young Racing Driver Academy, finishing ninth in the standings with three fourth-place finishes.

Team principal Garry Horner said: "He's a popular figure with everybody at the team, and the results he brought home last year speak volumes about his development as a driver. Winter testing so far has been very positive, and there's definitely a good atmosphere building."

Lubin added: "I'm really looking forward to building on that development [from 2020]. The car itself is fantastic, and I'm already feeling very comfortable with the environment. The aim now is to continue that progress over the winter and be ready to hit the ground running in mine – and the team's – debut."



Lubin: Arden's first recruit

British F4 will go fully back to front each race weekend in the forthcoming year

BRITISH F4 INTRODUCES FULLY REVERSED GRIDS FOR 2021

The British Formula 4 championship will have a fully reserved-grid race each weekend in 2021 in its first major format change since it adopted FIA F4 regulations in 2015.

The category previously for its reversed-grid counter reversed 50% of race one's classified finishing order, and will now reverse the whole field based on qualifying times. The plan is for the reversed-grid race as before to be each meeting's race two, though this may vary depending on timetables.

The new-format reversed-grid race also gets a revised points system, with scorers down to eighth place and the winner getting 15 points, replacing the standard top 10 scoring and the winner getting 25. Non-reversed-grid races will continue using the standard system. In another change, a point will now be awarded for fastest lap in all races.

Championship promoter Sam Roach said: "Our regulations have remained stable for over half a decade now, which is a real testament to how well the format has been received and – more importantly – worked in practice.

"However, we feel the time is right to shake things up a little bit for 2021, incorporating feedback from our teams. The changes give drivers a real opportunity to hone their racecraft.

"Generally speaking, grid numbers are looking really positive, both announced publicly and still in the pipeline, and it's full steam ahead for our team now as we prepare for our season opener."

ZAGAZETA HAS F4 TITLE AIM AFTER ARGENTI MOVE

Matias Zagazeta has said this year's British Formula 4 title is his aim after switching from Carlin to Argenti Motorsport for his second season in the championship.

The Peruvian karting graduate placed third in British F4's Rookie Cup in 2020 with a best overall race finish of fifth. Argenti, like Zagazeta, is entering its second British F4 campaign; Casper Stevenson finished third in the championship with the team last year. Zagazeta, who also tested a Carlin BRDC F3 car late last year, will get additional F4 experience over the coming weeks in the F4 UAE series.

Zagazeta said: "They [Argenti] are an amazing team and have been very supportive, friendly and professional so far during testing. I'm very confident with myself and the team. I will give everything on and off track to fight for the championship."

Team manager Michael Meadows added: "Matias established himself very well last season and showed signs of huge potential. Our job now is to nurture that talent and after some promising runs in testing with us, we're confident we can help push him to the front of the grid."

Zagazeta wants a competitive step up in F4 season two

MANSELL GRADUATES TO BRITISH F3 WITH CARLIN

Australian rising star Christian Mansell will step up to the BRDC British Formula 3 championship this season, continuing with the Carlin team.

The 15-year-old Australian made his single-seater debut last year in British Formula 4 and took overall victory in only his fifth race en route to winning the Rookie Cup. Mansell assessed his various 2021 options in an extensive late-2020 testing programme, including with Carlin's F3 car.

Mansell said: "It made sense to stay in a team that has pushed and supported me so much. [The testing] went really well. The British F3 car has quite a bit more power, so it's certainly fun to drive."

Trevor Carlin added: "He's such a great character and developed so much in the car throughout last season. The focus now needs to be on consolidating the experience and building a consistent level of performance. Winter testing has shown this car suits his driving style."

Mansell is a fan of Carlin's BRDC F3 car after testing it

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

RALLY NEWS

IN BRIEF

Arctic Rally joins WRC

Finland will get not one but two rounds of the WRC in 2021 with confirmation last week of the Arctic Rally Finland from February 26-28, replacing Rally Sweden. The rally comprises only 10 stages with the total timed distance just above the 160-mile mark. Dan Barritt, who competed on the rally in 2016, said: "It was minus 20 degrees all the time so the conditions are perfect. With it being so far north, it was dark a lot of the day, only four hours of daylight."

Neuville's switch

Thierry Neuville will not compete with Nicolas Gilsoul for the first time in 10 years, with fellow Belgian Martijn Wydaeghe stepping in to co-drive his Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC. Neuville confirmed the switch on social media, just a week before Rally Monte Carlo was due to start. No explanation ws given before MN went to press, but Gilsoul appeared surprised as he wrote on Facebook: "That's his choice. We lived together wonderful adventures. We will live some more again."

Breen's Rally2 praise

Craig Breen has described Hyundai's all-new i20 Rally2 as a "really big step" following three days of asphalt testing in France last month. Breen told WRC.com: "This is a completely new car, it just gives you so much confidence as a driver. When you have that, you can push that bit more and have a good feeling from the car. That's what we have here and I'd love to get the chance to get out in it."

Lehtinen to Toyota

Jarmo Lehtinen has parted company as Teemu Suninen's co-driver and joined Toyota in the event leader position. Lehtinen, who also co-drove Mikko Hirvonen in his career, left the sporting director role at Toyota in August 2017. Suninen will be co-driven by Mikko Markkula this season.

EVANS IS AIMING FOR PERFECTION IN 2021 WRC

Welsh WRC star says he wants to go one better in fresh campaign

Photos: Toyota Gazoo Racing, M-Sport, mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Red Bull Content Pool

Evans is focused on self-improvement

By Graham Lister

Elfyn Evans will strive for perfection on every round of the World Rally Championship in 2021, such is the challenge he expects to face in order to go one better than his 2020 runner-up spot.

Evans lost out to Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier in last month's Rally Monza decider. The 32-year-old from Wales starts the season-opening Monte Carlo Rally today (Thursday) as one of the main title contenders, and he's told Motorsport News that only the best will do.

"The aim is to take the title and I'm just focused on trying to find those small improvements in myself and the car to make a bit more of a difference," said Evans, who is co-driven by fellow Brit Scott Martin. "It will come down to how we improve and how well we perform. You go to every rally to try to do the best job you can, that's what we were doing last year and that will be the case again this year. I hope we continue to have this great feeling inside the car and inside the team as well and the results will come on the back of that."

Limited tyre tests

Evans has pointed to his lack of knowledge of the new-for-2021 Pirelli tyre as a potential drawback on the Monte, having managed just two days' running on the Italian rubber. Pirelli is providing its P Zero in soft and supersoft compounds plus the Sottozero winter tyre, which comes with or without studs. But Evans admits making the right tyre choice for Monte's traditionally changeable weather and stage conditions will be tough.

"The performance levels seem OK but they work in a slightly different window and the challenging thing for everybody is we've had very limited running," Evans told MN. "Monte is difficult to make the right tyre call at the best of times. When you have limited data to back up those calls it becomes a bit more tricky. But everybody is more or less in the same position."

Setback for Ogier

Ogier's Monte Carlo preparations suffered a setback when he crashed in testing last week. The seven-time Monte winner and co-driver Julien Ingrassia were both uninjured when they crashed a Yaris WRC test car on a road east of Gap, Ogier's home city.

"We got caught out by a slippery braking," Ogier said. "Sorry for the team for the extra work but thankfully we are both OK. We are ready anyway to start the season in Monte."

Evans and Barritt won GB

EVANS AND BARRITT MOURN LOSS OF RALLY GB IN 2021

Two of Britain's leading WRC contenders, Elfyn Evans and Dan Barritt, have spoken out following confirmation that there will be no UK round of the world championship in 2021.

Significant efforts had been made to switch the event from Wales to Northern Ireland, where there remains a strong chance of tourism board support, but the event's hoped-for inclusion on the WRC calendar has been put back to 2022.

"To be honest the first disappointment is Rally GB is looking like it's no more for the foreseeable at least," Evans told MN. "I really wanted to drive the Yaris at home because it would have been a great car for Rally GB and that's a shame. But equally I was looking forward to going to Rally Northern Ireland. Now that's off as well it's a double disappointment as such."

Barritt, who co-drives Toyota junior Takamoto Katsuta, said: "Arguably my greatest moment in rallying was on Rally GB so not to be able to go is a big, big shame. I just hope the powers that be, Motorsport UK, the sponsors, whoever can find some sort of solution to keep a top-line rally in the UK, they have to.

"The sport is reasonably strong at the top level with Elfyn fighting for the championship and Gus [Greensmith] coming through. British co-drivers have been historically at the top of the sport for 40 years so the pedigree in the UK is really good. It would be a shame if we didn't have a top-line event to go with it."

Stephane Peterhansel won a record-extending 14th Dakar Rally last week, finishing 14 minutes ahead of Nasser Al-Attiyah with Mini X-raid team-mate Carlos Sainz third. Sebastien Loeb's event for Prodrive was a nightmare, and he retired on the eighth stage with suspension damage. Former WRC driver Kris Meeke won two stages in the SSV class but finished 85 hours down on class winner Francisco Lopez after suffering mechanical and navigational issues, particularly in week one.

HYNUDAI MAN TANAK UNFAZED BY MONTE RETURN

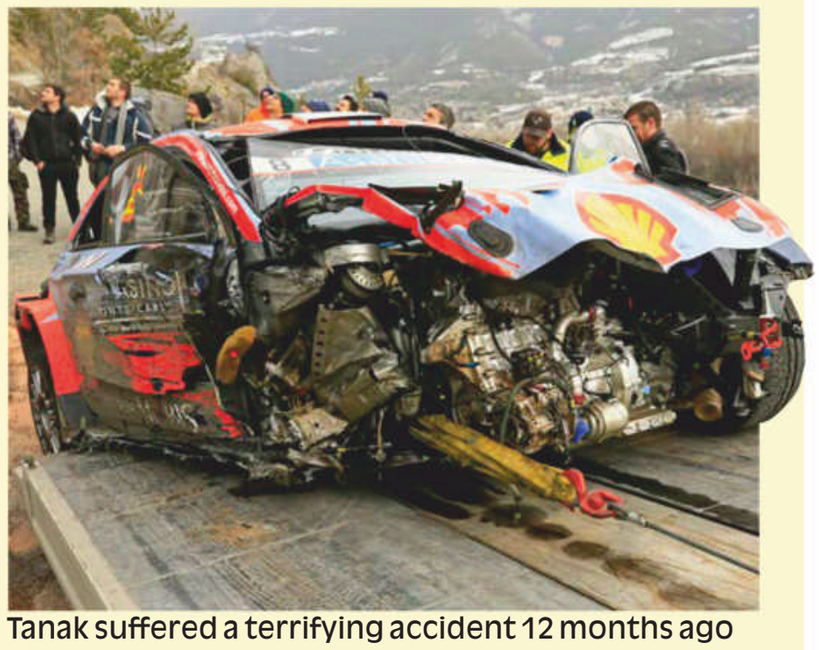
Ott Tanak insists he's over the high-speed smash that wrecked his Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC on his debut with the make's factory team on last season's Monte Carlo Rally.

Tanak and Martin Jarveoja were uninjured when they left the road on the fourth stage of the event and crashed heavily. They were in fourth position at the time.

"It's been a year and actually it never really affected me," said the Estonian. "The next round after Monte Carlo in Sweden was all fine, so no stress. Probably in this [part of the stage] I would not try to be a hero anymore."

Of his Monte preparations and the switch to Pirelli control tyres for 2021, Tanak said: "We had a test before Christmas and we had another one just before the event to get as much experience as possible with the Pirelli tyres. We still need more mileage to understand how they work and in which range. Making the right tyre choices will be even more interesting."

Tanak starts the Monte Carlo Rally after learning there will be at least three editions of Rally Estonia as a WRC event following confirmation of a two-year deal to cover 2021 and 2022. He won the event last year.



Tanak suffered a terrifying accident 12 months ago

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RALLY NEWS

MELLORS FANCIES BRC RETURN IN 2021

Ollie Mellors is interested in another British Rally Championship assault in 2021 but harbours ultimate ambitions to compete at an international level.

Mellors finished fourth in a Proton Iriz R5 on last year's Cambrian Rally before the BRC season was cancelled due to Covid-19, and has told MN he'd like to return because he likes the new calendar.

"They're events I think I could do alright on, they're nice rallies," he said. "I think they've been fairly realistic with it. The problem is sponsors at the moment. I don't want to be scraping trying to find £200,000 or whatever to go and do ERC so if we can do BRC on a relatively cheap budget, at least we're doing something. It's just hard to say what's going to happen."

The long-term goal remains to compete internationally: "We had a couple of plans for this year which we're still working on and hopefully they come off and if they do then that would be really good and we could see a couple of cars in ERC and WRC."

Mellors has also "not ruled out" continuing his Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship season but not at the expense of any other plans. "Darren [Spann] does an amazing job with the championship and it would be great to support that," he said.

Mellors has eyes on BRC

Photos: Chicane Media, Jakob Ebrey, M&H Photography

Mull Rally route has caused a splash lately on social media

MULL RALLY MAY NEED TO CHANGE ITS FORMAT SOON SAYS MULTIPLE WINNER

Paul MacKinnon thinks the popular event may need to deviate to protect its long-term

By Luke Barry

Three-time Mull Rally winner Paul MacKinnon has offered his opinion on the future of the event, telling Motorsport News "a compromise between the tradition and the new proposals might have worked".

A community consultation – necessary to secure the valid permits to run a closed-road rally – caused a stir last month with Mull organisers proposing several changes for the 2021 event, including fewer night stages. Feedback from the consultation therefore dictated that the majority favour a traditional route as per 2019 so the organising team will now move forward with route planning based on the 2019 route.

But MacKinnon, who is also a resident on Mull, thinks adaptations should be made to the itinerary in order to preserve the rally's long-term future. While Mull remains one of the most popular events in the UK, regularly selling out its 100+ entry in a matter of minutes, it could soon lose its unique place as a road rally with an increasing number of closed-road rallies cropping up across the country.

MacKinnon told MN: "With everything you need to move forward all the time, especially in motorsport. It's just not the way it was 30 years ago.

"I suppose short-term you'd say the rally's perfect: it runs well, it's got a full entry but my fear is short-term's good, but long-term where are we going in 10 years? These guys who want tradition, will they still be doing the rally in 10 years' time? Probably not.

"Maybe I'm slightly different from a few folk where I've thought for a few years that there could be room for change. OK the change that was proposed for this year, as someone who's pro change, I did feel it was quite a dramatic change from the tradition but I get the ideas behind it.

"I felt there was a compromise between the tradition and the new proposals that might have worked," MacKinnon added. "It's easy to come up with these scenarios without having the full facts, but we love the challenge of the night stages, that's what Mull's famous for so why not keep the night stages alive but also have a good, strong daylight core to the rally too so you've got almost a 50-50 scenario that can hopefully pacify everyone?

"It all comes back to the reality, if there's anything at all [this year] I'll be happy! Beggars can't be choosers."

Series organisers are aiming to create the biggest UK road rallying championship

BTRDA LAUNCHES NEW TARGA ROAD RALLY SERIES

The BTRDA is returning to road rallying for the first time since 1987, creating the new Targa Road Rally Championship in 2021.

The series will consist only of single-venue events this year but coordinator Alan Wakeman told MN that Silver and Gold Star rallies – like in the BTRDA Rally Series – are being considered for the future with Gold Star events taking place across multi-venues.

"There's so much doom and gloom out there right now especially in stage rallying and Rally GB etc etc, but Targa rallying is just such a very positive story because it's in a massive growth phase," Wakeman said.

"We want to appeal to novices and also the more experienced. We're focusing on under-25 drivers, and there are awards for drivers and navigators under 25 [but] there's also those over 25 then we split them into different classes: expert, semi-expert and novice."

A 10-round calendar with a wide geographical spread has been announced but Wakeman insisted that all dates are provisional due to the ongoing pandemic.

"We accept 2021 will be fluid," he said. "The bottom line is we're being flexible this year, we've got to be quick on our feet, things will change but the way that we've built the regulations, we should be able to accommodate some change."

Points will also be available to competitors for marshalling on events. For more information, email targa@btrda.co.uk.

SEVERAL RALLIES FALL TO THE COVID AXE

Just after Motorsport News went to press last week, the fate of five more rallies that were set to run early in the 2021 season were sealed.

The first to be postponed was MN Circuit Rally's Snetteron Stages Rally (set for February 20) that followed the Brands Hatch, Alan Healy Memorial and Neil Howard Stages in being postponed.

The Speyside Stages (April 17) was cancelled for the second year in a row. The forest event was to be the Scottish Rally Championship's second round. The third event – the Jim Clark Rally on May 28-30 that is also the third round on the 2021 British Rally Championship schedule – was also cancelled last week.

Organisers have, however, pledged to run the Jim Clark Rally on the same weekend next year in 2022, which will hopefully be the first Jim Clark to run in May since 2014.

As predicted by MN, the Rallynuts Stages – on the same date as the Speyside – was the fourth affected event. It was postponed, becoming the second BTRDA round to do so after the Malcolm Wilson Rally. The Plains Rally on May 22 has also been postponed, with the organisers working towards an early August date.

MILNER "SERIOUSLY LOOKING" INTO A RALLYING COMEBACK

Double British Rally champion Jonny Milner has revealed he is keen for a rallying return, ideally in a Toyota Corolla WRC.

Milner's last full season of competition was in 2010 when he won the British ANCRO with the same Corolla he took the 2002 and '03 British titles with. He has lately devoted his time to helping his daughter Katie's racing career, but he feels she's now at the point where he can begin to concentrate on his own motorsport efforts again.

"Watch this space for the future because I've got Katie to where I need her to be now so she can do stuff on her own, so now we seriously are looking [at a return]," Milner told MN.

"I've rebuilt my rally service truck, my recce car is all here still which I've had for 20 years, everything's here so the crash helmet's just gathered dust, it hasn't been retired yet!"

●*Jonny Milner readers' Q&A, p14*

Milner's last full season of rallying was back in 2010

RALLYING MUST WORK HARDER TO PROMOTE ITS BENEFITS

Leading organiser is confident rallying can resume in England but not as it was

Photos: Chicane Media, Extreme E, Kris Farrington, 5 Nations BRX, MotorsportTools

By Luke Barry

Rally organiser Colin Heppenstall is confident that forest rallying will soon be permitted again in England but has told MN everyone needs to work harder to showcase the benefits rallying brings to the communities it visits.

In September last year, Forestry England conducted a review into motorsport activity on its land with all activity suspended until at least April 1 throughout that period. MN understands that a meeting on this subject was scheduled for last week but Forestry England has been "diverted a little while we manage the new lockdown restrictions".

Heppenstall, who organises the Carlisle Stages as well as the biennual Roger Albert Clark Rally, thinks the strong response from the rallying community should ensure the result of the review is a positive one.

"Do I think rallying will stop in the forests due to this review? Realistically no I don't," he told MN. "I think it was time for forestry to do the review. Rallying needs to show what benefits it brings to local communities

"I think organisers don't help themselves, me included," Heppenstall added. "I think we should do more quantifying of what we actually bring into the local area but I also think it shouldn't have to come from individual events, it needs a third party organisation to have true and meaningful data and that can only be led by the governing body unfortunately. This isn't having a knock at Motorsport UK, it certainly isn't, but we've been saying this for a number of years, this is the time when it actually should happen."

Despite the Welsh forestry body – Natural Resources Wales – extending its deal with Motorsport UK to permit forest use for rallying late last year, an environmental review is currently ongoing that could impose changes for rallying. MN understands that this Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) review is nearing its conclusion and a workshop is being held this week with representation from motorsport.

Heppsenstall believes organisers "don't help themselves" via lack of promotion

Extreme E season will begin late

FIRST EXTREME E SEASON IS DELAYED BY TWO WEEKS

The opening round of the inaugural Extreme E season has been pushed back by two weeks to start on April 3-4 in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia, for the Desert X Prix.

The season opener had been due to take place on March 20-21 this year, but has been delayed due to restrictions surrounding the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. XE had originally planned to hold its opening round in Senegal in late January, but that round was also previously moved to a May date. The other four rounds remain on their planned weekends in the schedule.

When the 2021 XE campaign gets underway, it will be broadcast live on Sky Sports in the UK and Ireland. Extreme E chief marketing officer Ali Russell said: "The UK and Ireland has a huge appetite for motorsport and with the help of Sky Sports, we will reach a massive audience through this partnership.

"But our collaboration is about a lot more than airing exciting racing, as we share a common mission around the environment, it is fantastic to see the great work Sky is doing around its business practices and investments to protect our planet. Through our shows we will highlight the climate crisis and what we as a championship is doing to help, and how everyone can make a difference."

HOCKLY JOINS BTRDA CLUBMANS GRID FOR RALLYCROSS DEBUT

Multi-discipline racer Darren Hockly will make his rallycross debut this year by contesting the Production category in the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship.

Having previously raced in autograss and circuit racing, Hockly will drive a Hockly Racing-prepared Citroen Saxo VTS, making the switch from the Welsh Sports and Saloons Circuit Championship.

"I've really enjoyed doing some circuit racing, but I've missed the adrenaline rush of short, close racing in autograss," Hockly told MN. "Hopefully rallycross can combine the best of both worlds. I've bought a Citroen Saxo for the Production class as that seems like a competitive low-cost way into the sport, and we're going planning to do the full BTRDA Championship."

Modest about his hopes for the campaign, Hockly says gaining experience will be key. He explained: "We're going right through the car at the moment, it's fairly standard but hopefully we can improve it a bit from where it is now and make it reliable.

"I have some good friends in rallycross so I've been asking lots of questions and, if I enjoy it, we can update the car as we go along. The goal is just to get as many laps in as possible and see what it's all about."

Hockly is new to rallycross but not to motorsport

BELLERBY AND ELLIS COMMIT TO BRITISH RALLYCROSS

Yorkshire-based rallycross racers Paige Bellerby and Dave Ellis are the first drivers to officially pledge their commitment to the 2021 British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy.

Reigning Supernational Rallycross champion Bellerby – oldest daughter of multiple-champion Dave Bellerby – will return with her familiar Lotus Exige in the two-wheel-drive division. Following transmission issues in the third and final 2020 round at Lydden Hill last month, the car is undergoing a winter overhaul.

Ellis meanwhile – a former Hot Hatch, Super1600 and Swift Sport competitor – competed last year in the BMW Mini division, and surprised with his pace, netting a pair of podiums from the three rounds to finish second in the standings behind champion David Bell. Former Mini champion Drew Bellerby, Paige's younger sister, will sit out at least the opening part of the season but plans to return to the discipline following the birth of her first child.

Paige Bellerby: back in BRX

BRAND-NEW ESCORT RALLY CAR ON SALE

A brand-new Ford Escort Mk2 rally car is now available for sale as a collaboration between MST Cars and Motorsport Tools has spawned the MST Mk2.

Available in road or Group 4 spec, the car uses classic Escort elements like Minilite wheels and atlas axles but has modern electrics and an up-to-date Duratec engine.

"They're very competitive rally cars, even today, against the modern cars so we expect to be selling a few rally cars," said Motorsport Tools director Carwyn Ellis.

An MST Mk1 is also expected to be finished in the spring.

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

KEITH PICKERING

Formula Junior racer
Age:43 **Lives:**Romsey

Pickering: FJunior battler

He started off in the sport

"I started off as a mechanic when I was 18, working for a Caterham team called Tangent Motorsport in 1995. I did a year of that and then got a normal job. I did a little rallying as a navigator for my brother in a Ford Escort Mk2 in the early 2000s and was quality manager for McLaren Automotive for 11 years."

He raced for a while

"I came back to racing with a Lotus Elise about 10 years ago. I raced that for a while and then had a Ginetta G20 until children came along. Then Stuart Roach, who has been a friend for 20 years, offered me his Alexis Mk3 Formula Junior for the Silverstone Classic in 2018."

He got the bug

"I didn't start the first race when I thought the head gasket had blown. But I finished the second race and handed the car back in one piece. It was a baptism of fire as I'd never raced a single-seater before. But Stuart said they were going to Spa in September and I could borrow the car again."

They went to Spa

"Spa in a single-seater just had to be done so I said OK. We did everything we could to get me lower in the car, but it just wasn't going to happen, so I started looking out for my own car and I bought the Britannia which was kind of ready to go. It is a 1960 rear-engined car with disc brakes and one of only three built."

The car is now reliable

"Since then, it has been a roller coaster and it was horrendously unreliable to begin with. On the way back from Copenhagen in the summer I bought a new engine and since then the engine has been fine and we've been getting some good results."

There have been good results

"We went to Monza in 2019 and got our first class win, which was rather special. At the Oulton Park Gold Cup last year we got our first class pole and class win. We won the class in the 2020 championship and finished second overall."

He loves Formula Junior

"I'm enjoying being in historic racing. Formula Junior is a good fit for what I can afford and ticks all the boxes. The social side is fantastic, grids and big and there is a good mix of skills on track."

PARK TO TACKLE FORMULA ATLANTIC WITH AMERICAN MARCH FIND

Experienced battler to field a 79B in selected 2021 events

Photos: Paul Lawrence

Car is in the famous Quaker State livery

Park: new March 79B

By Paul Lawrence

Leading Historic Formula Ford 2000 racer Andrew Park will step up a level this season after acquiring a Formula Atlantic March 79B from a racer in San Francisco.

The Quaker State-liveried car arrived at his Cumbrian workshop just before Christmas and Park is keen to give the machine a run as soon as possible. However, racing plans for 2021 are uncertain due to work commitments and the arrival of his son Vinnie last summer.

"We were looking for a 79B and found one in an old advert," said Park. "So we rang up on the off-chance and it was still available. We were lucky to get it out of the docks before Christmas. It is in pristine condition and hasn't run for a couple of years. It's almost too nice to race!"

On the way back from the docks, Park dropped in on Tom Smith's workshop for Smith to give the car a check over and draw up a list of jobs to be done to get it ready to race in the UK.

"I'd like to run it this year," said Park, who didn't race last season. "The FF2000 Reynard is still in a million pieces after it blew up at Silverstone at the end of 2019."

Park says he'll pick one or two events for 2021, either in the Aurora Trophy or Historic Formula 2. "It's a good step up and I'll take my time to learn about it. It'll be the fastest thing I've ever driven."

The Monte Carlo Historique has been cancelled for this season

Monte Carlo Historique axed amid virus fears

The worsening Covid-19 situation in France has forced the cancellation of the 24th Rallye Monte Carlo Historique, which was due to take place on January 30 to February 3.

With a new 1800hrs curfew across France, the Automobile Club de Monaco confirmed that its historic regularity rally would not run in 2021.

The event draws competitors from across Europe although this year's entry was down to 180 cars from the norm of up to 300. The prospect of overnight accommodation being closed was another factor in the decision.

Christian Tornatore of the ACM said: "We really had no other choice available since the current situation does not allow us to organise this competition in its usual friendly and festive spirit."

Duo of Jamuns ready to tackle Historic FF160

Two examples of the 1971 Jamun T3 could be racing in Historic FF1600 this season after a gap of nearly a decade.

Andy Harrison bought an old hillclimb single-seater with a motorbike engine from a barn in Yorkshire and found a Formula Ford chassis underneath. After some detective work, it was identified as a Jamun T3 and handed over to Peter Alexander at PA Motorsport for a rebuild.

"It's original and it is one of the early cars," said Alexander. With FJunior experience, Harrison may race the car himself. Alexander has his own T3 undergoing a bare chassis rebuild after he found it in France several years ago. Both cars are due to be ready for the coming season.

New Newcastle event for historic rally icons

A new rally demonstration event from the organisers of Lombard Rally Bath will run in the north-east on Saturday July 3.

Lombard Rally Festival Newcastle will be held at Brunton near Seahouses, with a 2.5-mile asphalt special stage used at least six times during the day.

The focus will remain on a wide range of historic cars, with some star cars and drivers within the field for the non-competitive event.

The organisers, who already run the Lombard Rally Bath in October and the Mintex Rally Yorkshire in April, hope to add further venues to the Newcastle schedule in 2022.

IN BRIEF

John Aley

MN was sad to learn of the death of former racer and renowned rollbar manufacturer John Aley, a few days ahead of his 91st birthday. Aley raced across Europe in the 1950s and then raced Minis in international competition in the early 1960s. He became one of the first people to manufacture rollover bars and, in later life, was actively involved in the Motor Cycling Club's classic trials programme.

Brian Pearson

Former clerk of the course Brian Pearson sadly died just after Christmas. Pearson notably worked with the HSCC and the BRSCC and gave much to the sport he loved. He served his time as a marshal before stepping up to being a clerk of the course. Pearson was involved with the first Manx Classic on the Isle of Man in 1989 and the inaugural Dubai Grand Prix of 1981 and made many friends across motorsport.

HGPCA's packed 2021

The Historic Grand Prix Cars Association has planned an ambitious 10-event programme for 2021 after losing much of its 2020 calendar to Covid. Races for pre-'66 grand prix cars are planned at eight major European historic racing festivals as well as UK events at the Brands Hatch Superprix and Silverstone Classic. The planned season starts at the Jim Clark event at Hockenheim on May 7-9.

Hereford for VSCC

The Vintage Sports-Car Club has reworked its planned programme of early-season vintage trials and will now run the Herefordshire Trial over the weekend of April 24-25. This single event will replace the three events usually run in February and March, including the Derbyshire-based John Harris Trial. The club hopes to return to a fuller trials calendar again over the winter of 2021-22.

C-types in build

Ecurie Ecosse has announced plans to build seven replica Jaguar C-types to honour the success of its racing version in the 1950s. The cars, which feature detail changes to the period race cars, are destined for road use and come with a £430,000 price tag. Current Ecurie Ecosse patron Alasdair McCaig said: "How better to celebrate the success of the Ecurie Ecosse C-types than to manufacture a batch of cars in their honour?"

Penson for Lotus 23B

Historic racer and Lotus enthusiast Lee Penson will race the ex-Rodney Bloor Lotus 23B this season in a range of events that he hopes will include Goodwood and the Le Mans Classic. The 1962 has undergone an extensive restoration and did not get out during 2020 after delays getting the bodywork completed. To date, Penson has raced a Lotus 51 in Historic Formula Ford and a Lotus Elan.

COLUMN

ANDREW JORDAN

The 2013 BTCC champion says he is happy with life away from the tin-top paddock

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Jordan will tackle the Porsche 2L Cup

It is interesting that the main question I get asked whenever I post anything on social media these days is 'are you coming back to the BTCC?' I guess I never publicly said anything so here it is: I am not. And let me tell you why.

Team boss Christian Dick at Speedworks Motorsport got in touch about the Toyota BTCC drive for 2021. I asked him to give me a while to think about it. And then it struck me: if I was having to think about it, I shouldn't be doing it. The reaction I *should* have had was 'yes, I am in' and then worked out a way to make it stack up.

I have always said that unless I burn massively to do it, particularly with how intense the category is, I won't do it. I certainly won't do it just to try and earn a bit of cash. If I am going to do the BTCC, I will be all in to win, that is it. The attitude I had after I'd received the phone call from Speedworks was telling me something.

It has been backed up by the fact that last year, I genuinely didn't miss the BTCC once. If 2020 had have gone ahead like it had been planned and I was on the grid, I would have been invested in it. When I was forced to take a step back from it, I realised that I hadn't missed it.

I am not saying that the BTCC is shit: it isn't. I'd done it for 12 years and it is a bloody great championship. If I hadn't have been out of it for a year, I would still be on that hamster wheel and that would be everything for me. We would be looking for budget again for the next year and go again.

My opinion is that the top guys in it should all be getting paid – whether I am in it or not. They are all at the top of their game. When I was in the title fight in 2019, people like myself, Tom Ingram, Dan Cammish, Colin Turkington: everyone is performing at the top of their game and they are very skilled. I have been lucky that in the last few seasons I was able to earn money from it, but with things the way they are now, it is going to get harder for people to make a living.

Even with that aside, I just didn't burn to be back out there. It has been nice to be away from all the politics. Also, I like not being controlled by people.

As I stand here today, I don't know what sort of opportunity it would have to be to get me back onto the BTCC grid. You could say the Speedworks chance would have been a good one but there just aren't any deals around where people will pay you to go and drive.

You have to bring commercial aspects to every seat on the grid. Every driver does that. It is the way it is these days and that has worked for me in the past. Look at the way Ingram has set himself up. It is a prime example of working your sponsors to make sure you can earn a living. Hats off to him.

Miglia will be replaced with another for 2021

Me not being in the BTCC in 2020 was very unexpected but sometimes positives come from the unexpected. I'm in a happy place right now in my personal and professional life. I am hugely motivated for my racing programmes and our business. Just because BTCC isn't on my radar right now doesn't mean it's right or wrong. It's just the right thing for me, at the minute, to focus on and enjoy on other avenues. I'm able to paddle my own canoe and do what I want when I want.

I know things are different for me, because I run the Jordan Racing Team. I get to race great cars and work with some brilliant customers. I acknowledge I have been able to do what I have been able to do off the back of being a BTCC driver and having great backers.

I have a good business with JRT and it is my motivation to grow that. And that means I have been able to drive all sorts, probably more in 2020 than in any other year. And yes, that changes the approach because it doesn't mean that I am just stuck at home twiddling my thumbs missing touring cars.

My point is I am not in the BTCC in 2021 and it is *my* decision not to be in it. It is great when people comment on social media because people want me to be in the series. There were offers, but I made the choice to not be there. I have just signed to be a Red Bull driver again, and that shows that there is stuff I can do on-track and off-track that brings value for commercial partners.

This year, I will be racing a Shelby Daytona Cobra in the Masters Gentlemen Drivers series. I am doing the Porsche 2L Cup with Mark Sumpter and as many Mini Miglia races as I can. The Jordan Racing Team will be operating between 33 and 35 cars for customers too.

There is no time to miss the BTCC at all.

"I will not be racing in the BTCC in 2021 and it is my choice not to be doing it"

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

FEATURE

JONNY MILNER

THE LOSSES ARE WHAT I REMEMBER, THEY STILL HURT

Courtesy of readers' questions, the double British Rally champion reflects on the highs and lows of a career he insists isn't done. By Luke Barry

Milner was as charismatic as he was quick

What you saw was what you got with Jonny Milner. He never tried to spin a party line or mould himself to appeal to a certain brand, he simply wore his heart on his sleeve. And while he admits to Motorsport News that might have prevented him making the next step into the World Rally Championship, it endeared him to British rally fans up and down the country.

A touch over 30 years ago the proud Yorkshireman made his first foray into rallying with an old Peugeot 205 van as a starting point, and 13 years later, his name would be engraved on the British Rally Championship trophy. Armed with a Toyota Corolla WRC, he would repeat the feat the following year before narrowly losing out to David Higgins – this time in a Subaru Impreza WRC – in 2004.

A couple of seasons in a Mitsubishi Lancer followed where Milner lost out on the 2006 Mitsubishi Challenge title and a subsequent Mitsubishi works drive on a tiebreak before he took a step back, only to return again and win the British ANCRO series in the same Corolla he won his pair of British titles with.

To this day Milner remains fascinating in conversation. Thanks to the MN readers' questions, he discusses all sorts from cars with chocolate-like gearboxes, the pivotal stage his daughter Katie has reached in her racing career and what it was like competing at the height of the BRC's World Rally Car era. But let's start with how it all began.

Question: What got you into rallying?
Percy Wingrove
Via email
Jonny Milner: "Peugeot actually got me into rallying, Des O'Dell. I'd already started at 15 with autograss racing in a Mini and then moved onto rallycross, and we got noticed by Peugeot Talbot Sport and he wanted me to win the rallycross championship and then move into rallying. It was as simple as that. I had watched rallying, I was a big fan of rallying but it never really was my goal. The idea was to go autograss into rallycross into hopefully circuit racing. I love the cars-on-a-grid job and the thrill there. But don't get me wrong I'm very pleased I went this route.

"We were the first people to bring a 205 GTI into rallycross so that was where the first link started. Des and the team at Peugeot very kindly gave me all the old rally parts, so anything that Louise Aitken-Walker, Malcolm Wilson or Kalle Grundel had used that was sort of a lifed part then I would get it to chuck on the rallycross car. So it sort of got me the bit of hunger and then Des said 'I want you to come down to a rally day, I think you'll like it' and of course I did because it was way more seat time than a short rallycross race. So 1989 I bought an old jiggered 205 diesel van and turned it into a rally car.

"Then I went into full-time rallying with national championships so 1990 we were getting going, '91 we were team-mates to Kevin Furber in the national championship. I actually moved from home and worked at SBG Sport down at Daventry, a satellite team to Peugeot, and then went on my own for '92, went back down from 1.9 to a 1.6 [litre engine] and did Top Gear Junior Rally Championship and won that against our main competitor which was Mark Higgins – I have to keep on rubbing it in! And then it was obviously Shell Scholarship so really fond memories and really Des O'Dell without doubt and all the team at Peugeot in Coventry were big sticklers for getting me into rallying."

MN: What was the change like stepping from the little nimble 205 into the big brute of an Audi Coupe S2 and then a Ford Escort Cosworth with the Shell Scholarship?

JM: "Unbelievable. I suppose the problem was going from a Group A 205 that's built to withstand no matter what you do to it, then I'm going a bit of a step backwards if that makes sense because I'm going to the showroom class [Group N]. It was more delicate, the gearboxes were made of chocolate, very easily you can end up with only fourth gear so that took a little bit of getting back into being a bit kinder to the car but the difference to four-wheel drive was just phenomenal."

Question: Is there a sense of regret that you missed out on the F2 Kit Car era, instead you were competing against them in a four-wheel drive?
Alan Cartwright
Via email
JM: "I did own a Nissan F2 car but it wasn't a works car, it was actually a car bought through Jimmy McRae that Alister had put together, which was OK but I never really got my teeth into F2. We didn't lose our way but we sort of ended up running out of money like happens very often so unfortunately I never really got a proper full flight even though Dave Whittock of NME, Nissan Motorsport Europe, was very kind to us and Higgy [Mark Higgins] in getting us the opportunities to get in certain cars. We were the first people to drive a Nissan Sunny with a sequential gearbox on the Manx against Tommi Makinen and a few of the others there [in 1994]. They were the forefront of technology at that time which seems a long time ago now but it was a shame

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images

Milner's soft spot: Toyota Corolla WRC

because they were proper drivers cars. And they were front-wheel drive so it was back to what I cut my teeth in in the beginning but the problem is for most people, once you've been spoilt and got yourself in a four-wheel-drive car you really don't want to go back. You've got that grip, you don't have to struggle to find grip, the car has got it, so you just get on with it and concentrate on the line and being smooth."

Question: Have you always been a good firefighter?
Peter Adair
Via email
MN: This must be reference to the Jim Clark Rally 2000 Toyota Celica fire, but didn't you have a fire with the Subaru on the very same stage four years later?
JM: "Yeah we were seven seconds off the lead of the British championship and on the right tyre at the right time against David Higgins and a high pressure hose exploded in the tunnel that fed the gearbox and fire number two happened.

"But I'm a determined little critter when I want to be and it wasn't going to beat me, we were going to get the fire out. And in fairness the first fire with the Celica, we had got it under control by a sort of chain gang of helpful spectators bucketing water from a local person's garden basically. It was only when the fire brigade got there that they blew the extinguisher into where the petrol tank used to be and put it all up again. But that was a learning experience for them as well as us. It's frightening but I was determined not to lose the whole car which we didn't."
MN: You got back out again for the next championship round didn't you?
JM: "Yeah luckily Duncan, the car owner, had a spare bodyshell so we turned it round and got going again because even when we're slapped firm in the face we still try and keep going. That's sort of a good ploy for any determined rally driver, never say never, even when there looks to be no way out you'll find a way."

Question: It was 2002 and Justin Dale looks on as Jonny passes, the Peugeot's engine has just been on fire: title decided. Did Jonny see him parked up at that moment?
Martin Cullen
Via Twitter
JM: "I didn't but Nicky Beech, my co-driver, did. If you watch the onboard back you can hear he says 'Justin's parked up' and then he tells me about four or five times 'did you see Justin?' And in the end I'm going 'shut up let's get to the end of the stage'. It put me off my rhythm. But it was a real shame because it was a slightly different way of [deciding an overall championship], Super 1600 taking maximum points for a class win as we did for the overall rally win. So it was a way to encourage manufacturers in with Super 1600 cars so it was a strange one for me because I didn't have to just watch for people in the WRC class I had to also look at Justin's class and see where that little tinker was.

"But it was nice because it was all my friends and helpers from the Peugeot days that were running Justin as well. As much as I'd love Mick Linford and his team to win… I didn't gloat, that's the wrong word to say, but I polished the trophy in front of Mick's face because there was a lot of psychology going on so I was quite pleased that I didn't bite to any of it and I just got on and did the job we needed."

Question: What was it like to win your home event [in 2002, Trackrod Rally Yorkshire]?
History Human
Via Twitter
JM: "Really good, and people thought it was the one I knew most and it probably wasn't, it was probably the one I maybe knew least and hadn't been there that often, certainly not in a World Rally Car. You've just got to give the place so much respect, it's faster on those straights than it is in Finland so you really have got to have your eye in for that rally without a doubt. But it was great because both championships were won on that rally, my home rally in Yorkshire, so what better way to do it?"
MN: Where does the event rank in terms of rallies you've done? One of the best?
JM: "I think you've always got a soft spot for your home event. You look at Nigel Mansell saying there always was a bit extra half a second or a second a lap with the fact he had the home crowd cheering him on and they certainly did. It was every corner you were seeing people waving you on, way more than any other rally. Was it the best rally? It's up there but I still for me feel the Manx International really is such a challenge and you've got to give the place such respect and it bites at any point and to me the one that's probably on most British championship drivers' list is the Manx."

Question: Which British title are you most proud of, 2002 or 2003?
Ian Hardie
Via email
JM: "Both really, but probably the second season. The second season we came into it as defending champions, we'd got a good track record under our belt and had a good team running the car and were proudly running the car from our own little place in Yorkshire. But the second year ramped it up big time because you had people like Jari-Matti Latvala coming in, you'd Tapio Laukkanen the former champion in there in a car that was equal to mine if not slightly better. Both Tapio and myself looked at the end of one stage, can't remember which rally it was, fairly early on and Jari-Matti took about two seconds a mile out of us and we both sort of went 'OK, we better get on with this! This lad's going to be hard to beat' and of course we know where he went but you had to go with him. I couldn't stand still you had to push the envelope and it brought me on as a driver big time."

Question: Which was better, the Corolla or the Subaru?
Derek Gumbrell
Via email
JM: "I've been fortunate to drive a few different World Rally Cars. They all more or less handle the same, or you can make them all handle the same and do what you want them to do. I've a really soft spot for the Toyota because that really was a home team effort. I think I'd probably have to say the Toyota. I felt that it was a stronger car, if you asked me to go back and say should I have kept it for a third year then probably yes, that would've been a more reliable car than the Subaru.

"Whether it was down to our preparation of the Subaru or just the fact the Subaru needs more parts changing earlier. Probably for a lot of years I'm the last driver to win the British Rally Championship by running the team, building the engine, building the gearbox, doing everything from in-house here. So none of it went away to Cologne or TTE or Prodrive it was all done in-house here so the Corolla's got a very nice soft spot and I think in the future if I were to choose a World Rally Car, if I were to buy one back, it would have to be a Corolla."
MN: At the time, I presume the decision process in replacing the Toyota was that it was getting a bit long in the tooth compared to other cars and you had to update it?
JM: "Yeah. We knew it was going to be a tough year for the third year and it was a challenge that still hasn't been done yet, three in a row. Obviously Matt Edwards was looking like he was on track for last year until we had everything stopped so it was a thing that not even Jimmy McRae had done, three in a row, so it's the one that got away. It's the one that hurts most and the one I remember most."

Question: Ulster Rally 2004, was that the most agonising result you ever had?
Michael Murray
Via email
JM: "Like I said before it's the ones I remember more than the wins, the ones that got away. A silly mistake, pushing a bit too hard, thought I had the car underneath me, semi misheard a note but it was certainly not Nicky's fault it was my fault 100%.

"I went for what everyone's done and I'd never done it in Ulster, I'd never gone into a field through an open gate. It looked like it was just going to tighten that bit too much on me so I thought 'right I'll exit the stage straight on into the field that's fine.' And then, jigger me, in the middle of a field was a ditch. So we got into the field no problem, were on the handbrake got it turned round and coming back out more or less and then wallop, it just beached itself. It was stupid really but only in Ireland I suppose. There's never a boring stage there! It does hurt now and coming up 17 years later, it still hurts. But if it didn't there's something wrong. You learn from your mistakes don't you?"

Question: Who was your toughest rival in the BRC? And tell us about the fight with the Irish boys!
Nick Sullivan
Via email
JM: "Well it was a difficult one really against Tapio in the Subaru because there only really was us two. You had to be first or second, it was as cut throat as that after Jari-Matti had kept chucking it off into the bushes, and I mean that nicely! So that brought Tapio and me on really, having young Jari-Matti Latvala against us but other than that the first year against Justin Dale, I wasn't directly against him was

continued on page 16

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FEATURE

Ex-Solberg Subaru was more modern than Toyota but less reliable

Laukkanen was a chief rival

Manx Rally was Milner's favourite

Two weeks after a fire, Milner returned in his Toyota Celica GT-Four

A new car in 2004 but not another British title, which still hurts

Milner believes his 2003 season was his greatest behind the wheel

I? Really the second year with Tapio and Jari-Matti was probably the best I've ever driven I feel and then in the early days you go back to the junior championship there was a good field of good, hot young drivers. You had to keep your nose clean, we were all very inexperienced and you had to be on it. Nothing else in the world mattered but that next rally and that next stage."

MN: So the second part of that question with the Irish, was there a fierce battle between the British and Irish Tarmac competitors?

JM: "In Higgy's eyes he had to beat them no matter what. For me, I was happy to win the British championship. I didn't need to beat the Irish so I didn't go out to beat the Irish. They knew their stages very well and you had to give them some respect that they were hard chargers to beat. When it became a little bit more even is when you went to the Manx. Then they hadn't done it as much as their own home stages so then we can open the can of whoop ass on them! But on their own territory you just had to be mindful they knew it well."

Question: Was it the heartache of missing out on the 2006 Mitsubishi Challenge that made you stop competing? And how special was it to return and win British ANCRO in 2010 in the same BRC-winning Corolla?

Scott Steele

Via email

JM: "Joint-winners with Gwyndaf Evans. Again a silly mistake I slipped off the road on the RAC Rally [Wales Rally GB] and gave it back to Gwyndaf but those were the days when they brought SuperRally in. Taking away the SuperRally idea, we'd have won it hands down. But it was OK, it wasn't the heartbreak of when we lost the championship in 2004.

"The reason we stopped was down to the budget. We were running our own business, you couldn't just keep on spending, spending, spending. It stopped because of financial constraints, I'm still hungry now to do something. Of course, we were then in a position to buy back the Corolla in 2009 off Derek McGarrity and rebuilt it all and off we went to do the ANCRO. Brilliant. To get the car back that I won the British championship in was phenomenal and went on to win that which was great. And I think I'm still the current national rally champion [as the series stopped], it's a long time I'm a reigning champion now! Ten years!

"Of late, the Corolla went and all my time and attention was put into my youngest daughter Katie with her racing career, and she's only just fledged the nest now in the fact she's an academy driver for McLaren, first-ever female factory driver signed by McLaren and that's a massive opportunity and she pinches herself every morning. She was never interested in rallying. I never instructed her how to drive a car all I could do was give her the best car I could prepare for her ."

Question: How come Katie never followed you into rallying and went racing instead?

Bruce Rogerson

Via email

JM: "She was like her other two sisters, interested in horses to start with and then got bored with having to muck them out when it was a cold morning and this, that and the other so we started at autograss racing at 12, so she did really well in that, came to the top of her club championship.

"And then the best year she finished second overall in the country and it was looking like all she could do was shoot off into the lead and win all the races. She got to where she needed to be so then we had the opportunity of looking to take her into circuit racing. There was still a chance she could rally because autograss racing is mud, so the car's sliding about, you're drifting. But she, like me, loved the fact there were 10 cars on the grid and she was having a real fight through them.

"It's never even entered her mind to have a go at rallying so off she went to do the Junior Saloon Car Championship in a Citroen Saxo in a learning year the first year then she won the championship the second year. She was the first girl to get a pole position, first girl to win a race and then obviously the first female to win the championship and she won the championship by the most points.

I keep saying it was the well-prepared car by her dad, but no it was her driving… that's still out with the jury!"

Question: How come a lot of your rivals flirted with WRC and you didn't?

Mark Freeman

Via email

JM: "I'm happy with where I was.

I think anybody that's come through the British championship and won the British championship would have aspirations of going to the World championship.

I suppose we never pushed crazily to get to the next step because alongside the rallying I was trying to run my own

Milner celebrates a second BRC title

business, my own engineering company and we had a lot of work with Toyota all over the Europe and in fact the world now.

"So that was always a fallback plan if the rallying didn't earn me a living. So I didn't put all my eggs in one basket, I was happy to have two baskets and have the engineering business alongside and develop that. It's not one that got away, it would've been nice to have a go at WRC but I suppose you're watched by a lot of people, you're watched by a lot of teams and your face has to fit. I was quite a straight-talking Yorkshireman back then, I still am now, and you know I say it how it is which maybe isn't the completely correct way but no regrets.

"I'm still the same person and my business is doing very well and I'm happy with that. The fact that I've had 10 years off really between winning the national championship and now is down to what I did with Katie and then watch this space for the future because I've got Katie to where I need her to be now so she can do stuff on her own, so now we seriously are looking. I've rebuilt my rally service truck, my recce car is all here still which I've had for 20 years, everything's here so the crash helmet's just gathered dust, it hasn't been retired yet!"

Question: How do you feel about the BRC these days. Do you think you could still be competitive in today's climate of BRC rallying?
Malcolm Wilson Rally
Via Facebook
JM: "I'd like to hope I'd be competitive! It unfortunately looks quite an expensive championship. I know that when Mark Taylor ran the championship in our days it was frowned upon if you brought something in particularly brand-new to compete in the British championship. If there was any mistakes, I'm not saying I'm the messiah to know all the answers, if they put a six-year cap on the cars to say you can have nothing [newer] than a six-year-old World Rally Car it made it affordable for people, rather than what we've got now which is an expensive championship to do. [It's] not only expensive to buy the car, to support the car, the rebuilds of the car and everything else but don't get me wrong they're the types of cars I want to see out there! And fair play to the boys and girls that have got out there and found the budget to go and do it and it's what the spectators want."

Question: Do you think the new hybrid regulations for the WRC will bolster the number of cars entered?
Joe Bramble
Via Twitter
JM: "I think hybrid has got to be looked at. You've got Dakar going hydrogen power, you've got many championships trying to move technology forward and it's in defence of motorsport that Formula 1, rallying, touring cars and everything else that in a lot of cases in the very early days they were the very first people to develop ABS and sequential gearboxes and all these things which are now commonplace on road cars.

"So it's a perfect development testbed for future cars without a doubt. We've got to go that way, we've got to be greener but I think the problem is the price will go up as well but we've got to move with the times. We can't do what we have been doing, we've got to move forward." ■

Making a splash in the Mitsubishi Challenge. Ultimately Milner would lose out to Gwyndaf Evans in 2006

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FEATURE

WHY THE WRC WILL BE EVEN TOUGHER TO WIN IN 2021

Graham Lister explains that this year's line-up is an open book

Ogier will want to sign off with a winning season

On December 6, 2020, a truncated 48th WRC concluded in Monza a mighty 319 days after it started, such was the impact of the first, frightening wave of Covid-19 cases.

In the French city of Gap today (January 21), the 49th season gets underway 46 days after Sebastien Ogier celebrated making it world title number seven, as his Toyota team-mate Elfyn Evans was left to reflect on what might have been.

Welshman Evans had fought Ogier, arguably rallying's best driver, from the Monte opener to the Monza closer. He aced the Frenchman for an age on round one, outpaced him in Sweden, took advantage in Turkey before handing him a 14-point deficit to overcome at the Italian Grand Prix venue just last month.

But Evans came unstuck on a particularly slippery section of Lombardy Tarmac on the penultimate afternoon of the season before rushing, heroically, from his stricken Yaris WRC to warn his chasing colleague of the danger ahead.

It was the most selfless of selfless acts but ensured the wait for a third British WRC champion driver would continue.

Evans, who turned 32 last month, hasn't had to wait long to have another crack at the crown and, as he tells Motorsport News on these pages, nothing else will do in 2021 when a 12-round campaign is on the cards, Covid-19 permitting.

However, calling what will be Ogier's last season before WRC retirement is the tallest of tall orders. New-for-all Pirelli tyres provide the unknown quantity, new events pepper the schedule, while the competition has raised its collective game.

Ott Tanak, whom Ogier dethroned last term, can count on the continuity of a second Hyundai stint. Team-mate Thierry Neuville will, for his sake, be back on the kind of form that made him a Monte winner in 2020. Kalle Rovanpera, meanwhile, was mighty during his first year in the top flight and can only get better and better still in the third works Yaris.

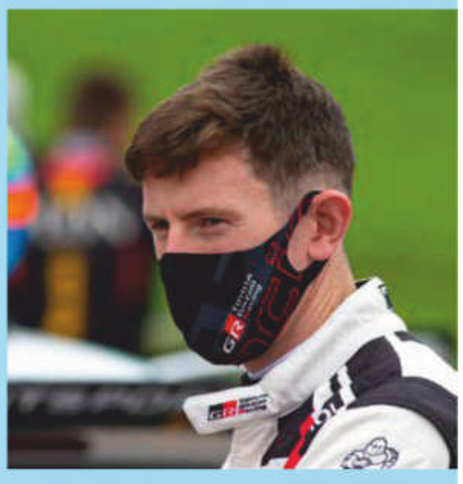
Dani Sordo and Ireland's Craig Breen also have what's required to take points away from Evans and co-driver Scott Martin, although sharing Hyundai number three rules out a title tilt from either driver.

There are others on the permanent driver list but Pierre-Louis Loubet, Takamoto Katsuta and M-Sport-run Brit Gus Greensmith aren't yet ready to fight Evans for rallying's top prize, although Greensmith has ambitions to change that as he tells MN (*right*).

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Toyota Gazoo Racing, FIAERC.com Taneli Niinimaki:Rallism.fi

Britons Elfyn Evans, 32, and Gus Greensmith, 24, begin their season-long WRC campaigns on the Monte Carlo Rally with contrasting aims and expectations. Motorsport News got on the phone to find out more.

Q&A ELFYN EVANS



After finishing runner-up in 2020 what do you need to do to go one better in 2021?
EE: "There are quite a few areas where we weren't quite as strong as our team-mates. If you want to realistically fight for the title you have to be [as strong] everywhere. That's always the aim. There are certain bits that came down to inexperience, for example in Turkey when we didn't look after the tyres so well. The wheel doesn't need to be reinvented as it were, it's just a case of finding these small improvements."

Given how last season ended, how important has it been to get started again so quickly?
EE: "To be honest, I wasn't in too much of a bad place after Monza. What happened happened, and we have to learn from where we didn't do so well last year. But there's a lot of good to take from it. Obviously it wasn't such a long break, quite a short turnaround, but that's fine the way things are at the moment and everybody is in the same position. I'm just looking forward to giving it another shot."

You'll do so with a new boss. How's it working out with Jari-Matti Latvala?
EE: "It's easy to forget Jari-Matti [is only 35] because he's so experienced at WRC level. You think he's much older than he is. He has a great understanding of what makes a driver tick. He loves the sport and you're not going to find anybody more passionate than Jari-Matti. He's a genuine guy and I'm excited to see how it goes working with him."

Although the boss is new, your team-mates are known quantities. Is that good or bad?
EE: "It's a bit of a neutraliser for everyone because we all have at least one year under our belts with the team and car. I don't like to discount anybody because everybody is capable of winning a rally on their day. Seb is going to be a challenge to beat but Kalle has now got a year in the car, he's going to be very fast and we saw already his speed last year. It's going to be a competitive season, that's for sure."

Q&A GUS GREENSMITH

There are two Brits competing full time in the WRC as factory drivers in 2021 and you're one of them. What does that mean to you?
GG: "It's been my dream since I fell in love with rallying. It's the accumulation of years of hard work to get to this point. I've really got to knuckle down to make the most of it."

Why did M-Sport give you this chance?
GG: "My rallying for the last couple of seasons has been quite sporadic. M-Sport have seen the potential in me but it just wasn't being hooked up. Rich [Millner, M-Sport team principal] decided the best way to see exactly where my potential and ability lies is to give me a full season and a full testing programme."

So, you're not just a 'paying' driver?
GG: "It's pretty clear all of us have to bring something but a paying driver is a pretty ridiculous assumption. It's one of the things that gets on your nerves a little because the only thing I am doing is trying to be the best that I can. All I can do is try to deliver the results."

Should those who have judged you harshly in the past reset and judge you based on what you achieve in 2021?
GG: "Last year was pretty disastrous. It was a bad start to the year and then with Covid we just didn't have any testing so could never be competitive. This year I have everything I need to do my part of the job. One thing that's forgotten is this is my second year in a WRC car and my first full season. Sometimes last year I wanted it so badly that I wanted it too much. That's why things sometimes went wrong."

A full programme requires full preparation. What have you done to get ready?
GG: "I started working with a trainer, Rupert Manwaring from Hintsa Performance. He's Carlos Sainz Jr's personal trainer on-event in Formula 1. We speak daily and he sends me what I'm eating, what I'm doing in training. I've also completely restructured and broken down my pacenotes and there was a good improvement at Monza."

So, no day job, just training, driving and testing?
GG: "I'm just giving it absolutely everything I've got. I want to end this year with absolutely nothing left to give. If I do that then I will be in a good position to be here in future years."

DAN BARRITT EVENT GUIDE

The Arctic Rally is round two

Croatia joins the WRC line-up

Competitors will tackle Safari

Scott Martin isn't the only co-driving Brit among the Toyota ranks. Burnley's finest, Dan Barritt, will also carry the Union Flag on the side of the Yaris WRC he shares with Japan's Takamoto Katsuta. This is the 40-year-old's guide to the 2021 calendar.

1 Monte Carlo Rally
Base: Gap, France **Surface:** Asphalt
Date: January 21-24
Dan Barritt: "It's such a unique challenge. You never quite know what you're going to get with the weather. You can go to sleep thinking there will be no snow in the morning and then you wake up and it's snowed. You have to react in a short space of time."

2 Arctic Rally Finland
Base: Rovaniemi, Finland **Surface:** Snow/ice **Date:** February 26-28
Dan Barritt: "I was there in 2016. The stages are high speed with a really good ice base. It was minus 20 degrees all the time so the conditions are perfect. With it being so far north, it was dark a lot of the day, only four hours of daylight."

3 Croatia Rally
Base: Zagreb **Surface:** Asphalt **Date:** April 22-25
Dan Barritt: "Like all new rallies you'd go there earlier and do a pre-recce recce of the places just to get your bearings of where you're going, the route in and out of the city, the service park, things like that."

4 Rally Portugal
Base: Matosinhos, Porto **Surface:** Gravel **Date:** May 20-23
Dan Barritt: "There's a lot of history and interest in rallying in the north of Portugal because of the famous Fafe stages. It's relatively demanding when it's hot but if it rains it becomes very tricky. The second pass can be very rough because the roads are quite soft in places."

5 Rally Italy
Base: Alghero, Sardinia **Surface:** Gravel
Date: June 3-6
Dan Barritt: "It's notoriously hot at that time of year, some of the stages can be long and there are a lot of short, sharp corners. Traditionally dust is an issue and road position will be critical because of the cleaning effect."

6 Safari Rally
Base: Nairobi, Kenya **Surface:** Gravel
Date: June 24-27
Dan Barritt: "It's new to all the current generation. It reminds me of watching Colin [McRae] and Richard [Burns] on TV when I was a kid with the helicopters chasing them. I'm imagining it to be like an Acropolis-type rally but to sample it for ourselves will be unique."

7 Rally Estonia
Base: Tartu **Surface:** Gravel
Date: July 15-18
Dan Barritt: "A very fast rally, not too dissimilar to Finland with a good atmosphere. It's compact and the roads are soft, especially in the narrow sections, so you have to be respectful of the ruts in high-speed areas."

8 Rally Finland
Base: Jyvaskyla **Surface:** Gravel
Date: July 29-August 1
Dan Barritt: "Although you're excited to go you're also apprehensive. You really have to respect the roads because the speeds are so high, it's a different mindset. Knowledge is very important for the lines over the crests. You're pushing the envelope to keep the rhythm."

9 Ypres Rally
Base: Ypres, Belgium **Surface:** Asphalt
Date: August TBC
Dan Barritt: "I've only done the event once but the town is an historic place. If the rain comes the roads can become very dirty and it's easy to make a mistake. And if you make a mistake you can be punished quite a lot with the ditches, extremely tricky."

10 Rally Chile
Base: Concepcion **Surface:** Gravel
Date: September 9-12
Dan Barritt: "I'm expecting it to be warmer than when we were last there in 2019 when the rally took place in May. Back then we had fog and rain, and the characteristics of the stages were similar to GB with a hard base because they're using forestry roads like in Wales."

11 Rally Spain
Base: Salou **Surface:** Asphalt
Date: October 14-17
Dan Barritt: "It's meant to be going all-Tarmac, which we've not seen for 10 years. It means they have a lot of roads that haven't been used for a long time because of the gravel mix coming back. The stages are nice and smooth and really enjoyable to co-drive on."

12 Rally Japan
Base: Nagoya **Surface:** Asphalt **Date:** November 11-14
Dan Barritt: "It's based in Taka's home city and the service area is 15 minutes from his Dad's workshop. The stages are in the mountains and from the candidate rally we did and won in 2019 it's very, very narrow like Corsica, single-track with grass down the middle."

ENTRY LIST

World Rally Championship 2021

NO	DRIVER (NAT)/CO-DRIVER (NAT)	CAR
1	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Toyota Yaris WRC
3	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/Mikko Markkula (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC**
6	Dani Sordo (ESP)/Carlos del Barrio (ESP)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC***
7	Pierre-Louis Loubet (FRA)/Vincent Landais (FRA)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC*
8	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC
11	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Martijn Wydaeghe (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC
18	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Toyota Yaris WRC
20	Adrien Fourmaux (FRA)/Renaud Jamoul (BEL)	Ford Fiesta WRC**
33	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Toyota Yaris WRC
42	Craig Breen (IRL)/Paul Nagle (IRL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC**
44	Gus Greensmith (GBR)/Elliott Edmondson (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC
69	Kalle Rovanperä (FIN)/Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC

*Private entry; **Part programme; ***Part programme, Borja Rozada (ESP) replaces Carlos del Barrio after the Monte-Carlo Rally

Pirelli will supply the tyres for each WRC car

WHAT'S NEW

- Not since 2010 – a year before Elfyn Evans first took part on a WRC event outside his native Wales – has Pirelli been involved at rallying's top level. But it's back for 2021 as the official tyre supplier and provides its P Zero in soft and supersoft compounds plus the Sottozero winter tyre for the Monte, which comes with or without studs.
- Ace Irishman Craig Breen gets his first meaningful programme for the first time since 2018 after securing a part-season at Hyundai. Paul Nagle joins Breen in the third works i20 Coupe WRC. The newly announced Arctic Rally Finland is expected to be the pairing's first event.
- Although he starts his part-season on the Monte with regular wingman Carlos del Barrio, Hyundai's Dani Sordo has recruited Borja Rozada to co-drive him for the rest of 2021.
- Mikko Markkula is back co-driving M-Sport's Teemu Suninen following Jarmo Lehtinen's switch to a managerial role at Toyota, where Jari-Matti Latvala has been installed as team principal in place of Tommi Makinen.
- Belgium and Croatia host the WRC for the first time, the former's Ypres Rally taking over the planned Rally Northern Ireland's slot on the schedule. The Croatia Rally runs out of the capital Zagreb and has its origins in the country's one-time ERC qualifier.
- Kenya's legendary Safari Rally and Rally Japan also return for the first time since 2002 and 2010 respectively but both differ significantly from their respective predecessors.
- Finland gets two rounds following confirmation last week of the all-new Arctic Rally Finland based in Rovaniemi from February 26-28.
- Manufacturers, WRC 2 and WRC 3 drivers are eligible for powerstage points from 2021.
- Factory drivers start stages in three-minute intervals on all events following a streamlining of the rules. There will also be no 'overlapping' among the top 15 so a stage can't start until the driver running 15th on the road has completed the previous run. ■

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

FEATURE

LATVALA READY TO STEP UP AS NEW TOYOTA TEAM BOSS

Graham Lister says the WRC rally-winning driver's switch to management has raised eyebrows

Photos: Toyota Gazoo Racing, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Jari-Matti Latvala's last victory in the top flight was aboard a Toyota Yaris WRC on Rally Australia in 2018

The opening event: Latvala helped Toyota back to the WRC in 2017

Sebastien Ogier starts the 2021 season aiming for world title number eight aged 37. Jari-Matti Latvala starts the upcoming campaign still hoping to land his first world title aged 35.

But while it's the drivers' crown that's very much Ogier's focus, Latvala is targeting the manufacturers' award – as the Frenchman's team boss, no less.

The youngest winner of a WRC event aged 22 – his maiden triumph in Sweden in 2008 was the first of 18 at world level – Finn Latvala was the surprise choice to replace his legendary compatriot Tommi Makinen at the helm of the works Toyota squad for this season.

And shortly after Toyota's news broke, Latvala was on the phone to Motorsport News to explain why he took the job, why it means no more time behind the wheel in the WRC for the three-time world championship runner-up, and why a stint of national service will help him on his way as a leader rather than a mere driver.

"It was like a bomb dropped when they asked me from Japan to take this position," Latvala says of the unexpected job offer. "I would never have expected that I would be the one who they were thinking of for the role. It took about 30 seconds to decide if I go for it or not. The only thing in my mind stopping me is that it would mean not to drive in the WRC anymore as that was a decision I had to take. Otherwise, the answer was clear."

In theory, that clarity could translate as quite a sacrifice. But it's also quite ironic given Toyota's decision to axe him from its 2020 WRC line-up effectively left him out in the cold, save for a mechanically-troubled Rally Sweden outing in a semi-works Yaris last February.

"When I did the contract with Toyota I said 'I am a driver and I can't stop driving, it's in my blood'. I still need to have a chance to drive so I told them I will retire from the WRC, but I want to drive in historic events with my classic Toyotas. I can't be full time behind a desk. I still want to be a driver when I have free time and this was absolutely firm."

Latvala was 18 and a half when he won the British championship-counting South of England Tempest Rally in 2003. Although his WRC career was littered with costly accidents – both in terms of car damage and loss of crucial points – his speed was never in doubt.

His young age – as well as Ogier, Dani Sordo is also older – and his aspirations to compete in the new-for-2022 Rally1 hybrid formula, still makes his decision to quit driving at the highest level a hard one to accept.

"Honestly speaking I thought I would drive up to when I was 40 and even at the end of 2019 I had not given up hope I would be back," Latvala admits. "But then we did Rally Sweden and had the [car] problem and the rally went wrong early on. There was the idea that I would do Sardinia, Finland and probably Wales, but then coronavirus came and those rallies didn't happen. That was the moment I realised that the chance is going.

"I had a little bit in my mind that if I could get a programme developing a new car for 2022 that would be something. Then I started to realise it would be more and more difficult to find a seat. When this opportunity came from Akio Toyoda asking me to become team principal you can't turn it down. It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing. You have to say yes."

Although Latvala admits the offer was a shock to the system, the move also surprised the establishment. So why does Latvala think he was Toyoda's man for the challenge?

"First of all, I was there from the beginning when the team started," says Latvala. "I have a very big experience from the World Rally Championship and I have been driving a lot. Toyota wanted somebody who was the eyes of the pilot, I would say. The second thing is they wanted a person who could communicate with the media but it's also very important to be able to communicate with the team personnel and discuss what we can improve and see if there are any problems."

Has he encountered any problems?

"The day when you don't think about areas to improve you stop improving," he says in response. "We need to keep improving. If you want to have a team as successful as Volkswagen, that can win both championships each season, you need to be really strong and we aim for that. Tommi has done a great job and the team is at a very high level but always you can improve."

Latvala might have knowledge of and passion for the WRC in abundance but managing a team is a whole different ball game, as he's quick to accept.

"OK I haven't been leading so much but during the last year I've had a company in Finland I have been running and I did some leading practice at the military when I was there. But I am not going to be in a position completely like Tommi owning the whole team and starting everything from zero. The team is at a high level, everything is working with three other directors involved to take the team forward."

But as one of the WRC's nice guys, is he built to take tough decisions?

"I know there's going to be challenges, there will always be difficult matters, but how you approach them is the most important thing," he says. "You don't need to be an asshole when you bring things up. You have to find the problem and solve the problem rather than going behind the problem."

Nice or nasty, Latvala hasn't just been employed to talk to the press and keep his team smiling.

"Of course, we go out there to win, we hate to lose," he says. "Basically, the manufacturers' championship is really what Toyota wants. And if you can bring two titles in the same year nobody can ask for more. We just have to make sure we provide a car for the drivers to win rallies. We have the drivers to do that." ■

New boss has learned alongside the best

Jari-Matti Latvala has driven for some of the best team bosses in the business with Malcolm Wilson, Jost Capito and Tommi Makinen all keeping him in check over the years.

The Finn says he has picked up some useful tips along the way. "I will try to combine everything I have seen from my former team directors, take something from each of them," he says. "With Malcolm you shake hands, it gets done, you don't need a contract. That's something I appreciated a lot.

"Jost had 100% confidence in his team, in his people. He was concentrating to the areas he needed to. He didn't concentrate on the technical side at all because he knew there were the right people to do that.

"With Tommi, if you had a bad rally and did a mistake, he knew exactly as a driver how to cope with that. He was never blaming you, he was able to be very supportive on those difficult days and these are the assets I will try to take on board as team principal."

As well as showing a caring side, Latvala knows he has to get to grips with the 2022 rules ahead of the Rally1 era. "I need to know the regulations," he adds. "I have been following the changes so I am a little bit aware what's going to happen on the technical side, that the cars are going to be without a centre diff, less suspension travel, less aerodynamics. The car will be more demanding to drive, going more sideways but this way more and more skills will come up. It's very interesting."

Latvala (left) has done some learning from Malcolm Wilson

New team boss's last WRC outing in Sweden 2020 didn't go to plan

COLUMNIST

LUKE BARRY

Changes need to be made to British rallying, and made now

Photos: Toyota Gazoo Racing, Jakob Ebrey

UK has lost its flagship rally

Rallying must greatly evolve to stay relevant

I wish I had all the answers. I wish I had fewer burning questions. I wish British rallying didn't find itself stuck in such a rut and I certainly wish I hadn't seen it coming. British rallying finds itself in a very dark place at the moment, and we only have ourselves to blame.

At Motorsport News we try our very best to always find the positives but every so often there comes a time when we have to take the glass-half-empty approach and focus on the negatives. Something needs to change in order to protect British rallying, and it needs to change now.

If we're being brutally honest, things have probably needed to change for a good few years but now there really is no escaping the issue. No Rally GB on the World Rally Championship calendar is nothing sort of disastrous for rallying in this country, not least because it ruins a proud tradition but mostly because it reflects just how far rallying has declined in the last few years.

Realistically, though, this is just the tip of the iceberg. I only hope it serves to alert us all that nothing can be taken for granted. It's all very well having a proud history of great rallies and great drivers, but that'll be no use when the only image your grandchildren conjure up of a rally is a political demonstration.

This history is definitely part of the problem. There is a fairly widespread attitude issue within rallying – which I think we've all been guilty of getting sucked into at some point – where comparisons are made with the past. It's easy to do when things used to be so rosy on our shores; it's tempting to try and replicate it. But times change, things change: we should be aiming to shape the future not base it off a successful past.

We aren't living in a world where smoking is cool or danger is welcomed anymore. Instead, looking after the environment is a key objective. It's fairly clear – not least among my friend group who still have no idea what I write about for a living – that rallying does not enjoy the same public acceptance it once did. To all of us that appreciate its brilliance, any change to make it safer, shorter, more regulated isn't always appreciated but if we want to be openly welcomed into communities again, it's a path we might have to take. If rallying was currently better perceived, would we have in fact been able to restart multi-venue competition in some areas last year despite Covid-19 like most other European countries managed to?

Positive noises are coming from Motorsport UK, particularly from chairman David Richards who's been saying all the right things recently about believing in youth and ignoring the example of the past. It's now time for that to be acted on. And please don't misconstrue this as an opportunity to point the finger at Motorsport UK which, lazily, it can be very easy to do. How can it enact change when we have scenarios like the Mull debacle of last month?

For whatever reason, there's a real fear of change within significant quarters of the rallying community. Clerk of the course Andy Jardine merely suggested trying to adapt the Mull Rally route for 2021 and the Facebook backlash was obscene to the point of abusive. That does nobody any favours. And the rub is, the traditionalists that are doing all the complaining and are campaigning for rallying to return to "the good old days" are actually the ones preventing that from happening by being stuck in their ways and refusing to adapt to a new way of thinking. As somebody put it to me recently: "Motorsport UK aren't killing motorsport: it's the older generation who refuse to hand over the reins, but they don't realise that."

Rallying isn't welcomed by all like it once was

It also shouldn't be the case that somebody can walk away from rallying for a decade and when they come back, everything is broadly the same. However I have spoken to several people who have confirmed this is the case. Of course I'm not suggesting that they should return to a sport that's totally unrecognisable but, to enjoy any sort of wider relevance, as a community we have to embody modern technology and modern ideas. There are some people that are doing this, but their approach is being heckled instead of supported and that simply can't continue.

It's truly ironic that the word 'rallying' literally means coming together to support a cause, yet we seem unable to rally together to save rallying's future. It's no use pointing the finger, we all have to take responsibility and do our bit now. The question is: how? As I said at the top of the piece, I don't have the answers but I certainly want to be of help. Consider this a call to arms. Email me your thoughts to **luke.barry@kelsey.co.uk** and let's start brainstorming. I can't just sit back and watch the discipline I've always loved shrivel into non-existence.

"It's no use pointing the finger, we all have to take responsibility"

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

FEATURE

WHAT DOES BREXIT MEAN FOR COMPETING ON THE CONTINENT?

Motorsport UK has published advice for what competitors need to do post-Brexit when taking vehicles and equipment to the EU. Motorsport News looks at the implications

What goes on the truck, stays on it...

There's more now to consider for going to EU

Motorsport UK: advice

Unless you have been living in some sort of seclusion, you will know that on January 1 this year Brexit became official. And for UK competitors taking their vehicles and equipment to the European Union, be it to Spa-Francorchamps or Irish rallies to name but a couple of examples, things will be a little different.

Governing body Motorsport UK, after consulting government and others, communicated last week that it understands an ATA Carnet is required.

The ATA Carnet is a passport for your goods. It is a customs document that allows the temporary movement of professional equipment in and out of certain countries, including the EU, and avoids the need for unnecessary taxes and duties. The system is already long in place for taking goods to many other states, such as Australia.

You can apply for a carnet at the 'E-Cert' electronic portal at ecert.sgs.com. On the form you list and detail goods that you are taking across the border and returning. It doesn't cover consumables.

There is a two-part cost for obtaining a carnet. The first is a fixed arrangement/processing part, and Motorsport UK here for its members has negotiated a discounted fee of £240+VAT, down from £330+VAT, with Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce (GBCC).

The second part of the cost is the Premium, which is either a refundable deposit of 40% of the vehicle's value or a non-refundable insurance premium to cover 40% of the premium.

A carnet is valid for 12 months and its goods can be transported back and forth throughout its duration. The carnet can be provided quickly once applied for; Motorsport UK members can also get an express carnet service from GBCC for a £35+VAT premium, down from £75+VAT, that can be turned around in as little as an hour.

Additionally those with an HGV of over 7.5 tonnes and leaving the UK via the port of Dover or Eurotunnel now need a Kent Access Permit.

Motorsport UK has told Motorsport News it will publish additional information based on specific questions it has received so far, and will continue to provide advice as and when issues arise. Its members can also contact GBCC's carnet specialist Jonathan Crosbie for advice on 0121 274 3217.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR NATIONAL RACING?

The bad news for UK's competitors planning on taking their vehicles and equipment to the continent is that there now will be more paperwork and more costs, as well as potentially more delays. The relatively good news is that the required ATA Carnet is simple to access and with paperwork in place much of the rest of the process can, in theory, be fairly straightforward too.

A major implication however is competitors now have to ensure what is in their van or lorry reflects goods listed on their carnet for the 12-month period, both when leaving the UK and returning. So for example if you take tyres out you have to bring them back, even if worn.

Shaun Balfe of Balfe Motorsport, which has a Spa British GT round this year plus is planning other European competition, tells Motorsport News: "In summary it's going to be a quick learning process that's going to have to be quite administrative heavy. We're going to have to be very rigid with what goes on a lorry stays on the lorry. If you've got stuff in there that's not on the list, you've left in there by mistake, and the authorities see that, that could be a discussion and a problem."

Belgian-based John Svensson, whose team competes in UK Formula Ford, has experience of using carnets. He has a multi-car outfit and this brings particular considerations.

"If you list, for example, three cars you will always have to have that three cars in the truck, which is quite a big problem because sometimes you just take two Formula Fords and a touring car or just two touring cars…," Svensson tells MN.

"I will make [the carnet form description] as [broad] as I can, so I will put only four 'race cars' without naming any race car and I have to take always four race cars in the truck."

It should be added through that inadequate description of goods on a carnet can itself create problems.

Balfe says: "If it is policed and examined to the letter of the law, not knowing that motorsport is a bit fluid, then I can see it being a problem. If you get the wrong man on the wrong day, [and he] doesn't understand motorsport, I hate to say it but it wouldn't surprise me if we hear about race teams not making a circuit because they've had a border control problem."

Delays at borders may be especially common early on when less used to the process. "I used an ATA Carnet to go through Switzerland and it was a big big mess in the customs," Svensson recalls. "We were not used to all the procedures so we lost about six hours."

From its discussions with MN, Motorsport UK accepts that the process is new and will require a period of getting used to. The consensus too is that, as opposed to larger operations, those who only take a trailer to a one-off race on the continent may be more vulnerable to pitfalls. Also the one-off carnet cost could be more of a barrier for them.

Svensson adds: "It will increase all the costs for the spares, because the custom fee and everything it'll make the spares about 20-30% more."

Relative upsides for national racers include that with the season not starting in earnest at least until March there is time to learn from other sectors' experiences. Plus, as Balfe notes, motorsport's "small world" means competitors should learn quickly from each other.

He adds though that cost will also likely manifest over and above that of the carnet. "It sounds as if there will be cost implications because if each border control goes through its checks and procedures the time to get from a to b undoubtedly needs to be planned to take longer," Balfe says. "Logistically we're going to be a little bit more cautious and nervous about where we back to back the use of any single lorry between multiple championships."

Both Balfe and Svensson are considering leaving their lorries at the other side of the border for periods between races to reduce the complexities.

"Insurance costs are going to go up, transport, storage costs are going to go up. It's going to cost us more money to get to Spa and back isn't it?," Balfe adds.

For the racing competitors MN spoke to however, the new procedures are not yet impacting 2021 competition plans. "One or two bad experiences might change that but at the minute we're carrying on with what we want to do assuming that we're going to be able to do it when we want to do it," Balfe confirms.

"Knowing us Brits we're just going to adopt the attitude we're coming through until somebody says that we're not!"

Continued on page 24

FF1600 man John Svensson has experience of carnets

Balfe (r) predicts more administration, delay and cost

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FEATURE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Belgian Rally Championship

Belgium is a popular stop-off for British rally stars

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR NATIONAL RALLYING?

Ollie Mellors takes an optimistic view about the required post-Brexit adaptation

Meirion Evans believes the implications for rally cars has not yet become clear

The situation is no different for the UK's rally drivers, who now face an added headache if they want to sample continental or even Irish events. Cannily, British Rally Championship organisers pre-empted this with its 2021 schedule not taking the series outside the country. Yet, for some, rally plans are almost exclusively based abroad.

Meirion Evans is one such driver.. The Welshman, as well as working for Melvyn Evans Motorsport that prepares and hire out rally cars, has rallied in France in recent years in a Peugeot 208 R2 before progressing to R5 machinery and tackling the Irish Tarmac Championship. In 2020, Covid-19 stunted his plans but the two rallies he did contest in a VW Polo R5 – Galway International and Aarova Rally – Evans would have required an ATA Carnet to reach them.

This additional cost – and hassle – isn't enough to put Evans off though, even if he predicts others might not feel the same. He tells Motorsport News: "The thing is because the deal for Brexit came about so late I don't think anybody knows what's happening. If I was going to do a year [in Ireland] it doesn't seem too bad, it'll only cost you £800 for a year for instance, but I know a lot of Welsh guys that will go over and do one or two rallies because if you live in my part of Wales getting to somewhere like Wexford is an hour's drive to the boat and half an hour off the boat.

"It will deter a lot of clubmen who do one or two rallies a year because it's not really going to be worth their while. Beyond the carnet there's still quite a bit of work you've got to do on your end to send the stuff in because you've got a list of parts you're carrying. [But] for British motorsport it might not be a bad thing because they'll do more over here."

Evans is thankful Motorsport UK has issued advice and likely cost, but thinks not everything is quite clear yet. "Somebody told me that the ATA Carnet is primarily for race cars and they weren't sure how it works with rally cars being used on the road," he says. "I spoke to a guy in December who deals with international shipping, he's done a lot of work for a lot of people and he said then, it's his trade and he doesn't have a clue what's going to happen. So if somebody in the game doesn't really know then we've got no chance have we?

"The [other] hassle we've got as well is we'd always travel to Ireland through Fishguard-Rosslare even if we were rallying in the north, and then we'd drive up from Rosslare to Northern Ireland whereas now if we were doing say the Circuit of Ireland or the Ulster, we'd have to have an ATA Carnet to cross into southern Ireland and drive up to the north.

"It's more work but it's not awful"

"I don't think anything's impossible, it's just more work and you might have to incur a bit more costs. It's maybe just an extra day's transport time [when shipping things out] and it costs you a little bit more but it doesn't seem awful at the moment. But in terms of cars and stuff there's a lot of hoops you have to jump through again. For example we're restoring a Subaru for a guy in Ireland now and all of a sudden invoicing has become a lot more complicated, but again it's just one of those things we have to sort as we go along."

Ollie Mellors agrees. The 25-year-old works for preparation firm Mellors Elliot Motorsport and the team has plans to use its Proton Iriz R5 more regularly on the continent. However Mellors is "sure there's ways of making it happen so I don't think it'll hamper the job too much".

"It's just more money isn't it?" he tells MN. "It's one of those things, if it's what we've got to do then it's what we've got to do. It's like anything, until we get into it and start doing it you don't know how hard or how difficult it's going to be but I'm sure we'll find a way round it."

Evans is equally sure things will be resolved and, ironically, believes that the ongoing pandemic is a beneficial factor: "We're in the middle of two things here," he explains. "Covid kind of works nicely towards the Brexit thing because if we were trying to go and do some rallies now it would be a pain, whereas when the time comes when we can go rallying abroad maybe in four, five months' time maybe things will be a bit more clear." ■

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

A snowless Monte in 1983 is on YouTube

As you may imagine, YouTube isn't short of Monte Carlo Rally material to get you into the mood for the latest event. WRC's channel covers many recent rallies while the likes of British Pathe offer glimpses of very different Montes from yore. Yet VHS Rallies – a project to save rally footage from decaying tapes – offers something from between the two.

It's the 1983 event and a 12-minute wrap-up captured from BBC's Grandstand. This is the Group B era and it contains its cornerstones: mighty cars, stupendous drivers, plus spectators seemingly with a death wish.

Atypically for the Monte there is no snow, which impacts the outcome by tilting things from the four-wheel-drive Audi quattro towards the rear-wheel-drive Lancia 037. But still the action is captivating, as cars slide through crisp Alpine scenery and night stages, all amid the yelps of fevered onlookers. Plus there are interviews with pantheon drivers: Walter Rohrl, Ari Vatanen, Markku Alen, Stig Blomqvist, Henri Toivonen…

There's also something for the Dire Straits fans among you. David Icke provides the narration, but I guess you can't have everything.

You can watch it at youtube.com/watch?v=oVD_-dsDA9E or you can search '1983 Rallye Monte Carlo'.

Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

World rallying makes a small screen return

LIVE TV

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP RALLY MONTE CARLO

- **SS7:** Friday, 1230hrs-1330hrs, BT Sport 3
- **SS11:** Saturday, 1100hrs-1200hrs, BT Sport ESPN
- **SS13:** Sunday, 0900hrs-1000hrs, BT Sport 2
- **SS15:** Sunday, 1100hrs-1230hrs, BT Sport 2

Live motorsport is back this week, as the World Rally Championship season begins with its traditional curtain raiser: Rally Monte Carlo. Alongside the four live stages across BT Sport's network, you can watch half-hour highlights at the end of each leg too so that you're up-to-date.

Friday's opening day airs very early on Saturday morning on BT Sport 3 (0030hrs-0100hrs), with Saturday's second leg first broadcasting on BT Sport 3 22 hours later (2230hrs-2300hrs). The final day's action will be screened earlier on Sunday (1915hrs-1945hrs) back over on BT Sport 2.

For more off-road action, head to Eurosport 1 on Friday evening for a review of the gruelling 2021 Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia, won by Stephane Peterhansel's X-raid Mini (2000hrs-2100hrs). The latest round of the ice-based Andros Trophy can also be caught up on, with highlights from Serre Chavelier first being shown on Saturday on FreeSports (0930hrs-1030hrs).

Sky Sports F1 also has plenty for you. MN's picks this week are firstly GTR Race Features (Thursday, 1145hrs-1200hrs), where Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas square off against team boss Toto Wolff in Merc GTRs, and F1: The Next Generation (Saturday, 1145hrs-1200hrs) that looks at the rising stars of grand prix racing.

Luke Barry

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Graham Lomax has plundered his archive for this shot from the 1975 Racing Car Show

Another from 1975 taken by Graham Lomax

Daytona pit work, photo by David Harbey

Splash and dash, photo from Gary Hill

Magic of Daytona, taken by David Harbey

Oliver Clarke-Bull's photo of a Caterham grid

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, JANUARY 28 2021

*Correct at time of going to press

READERS' Q&A: PAUL O'NEILL

BTCC fan favourite tackles MN readers' posers

REPORT WRC GETS GOING IN THE MONTE

Full report from the opening exchanges in this year's fight

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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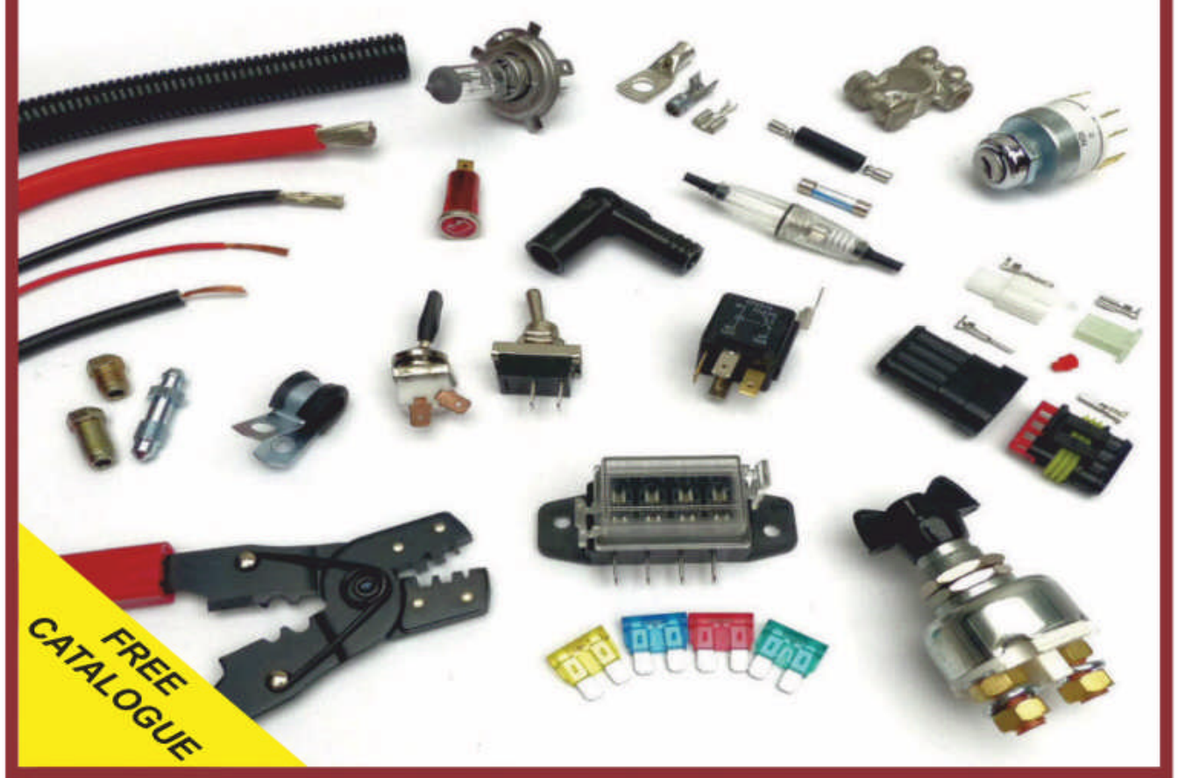

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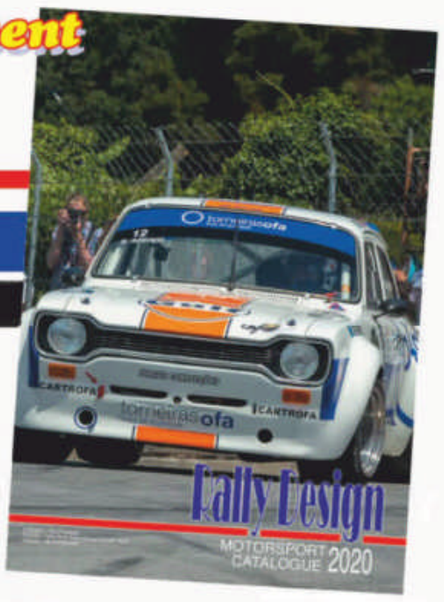

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Bonnet bump stop	*pair*	£6.20	£7.44
Bonnet rail bump stop, set of 4		£10.90	£13.08
Bonnet bump stop, centre-rear		£5.10	£6.12
Wiring loom bulkhead grommet		£6.90	£8.28
Bonnet release cable grommet		£5.20	£6.24
Steering column bulkhead grommet		£7.20	£8.64
Handbrake backplate dust boots	*pair*	£7.10	£8.52
Spedo cable bulkhead grommet		£5.20	£6.24
Throttle pedal pad		£5.20	£6.24
Brake and clutch pedal pads	*pair*	£8.00	£9.60
Shock absorber top caps	*pair*	£13.90	£16.68
Rear bumper side plugs, set of 4		£9.90	£11.88
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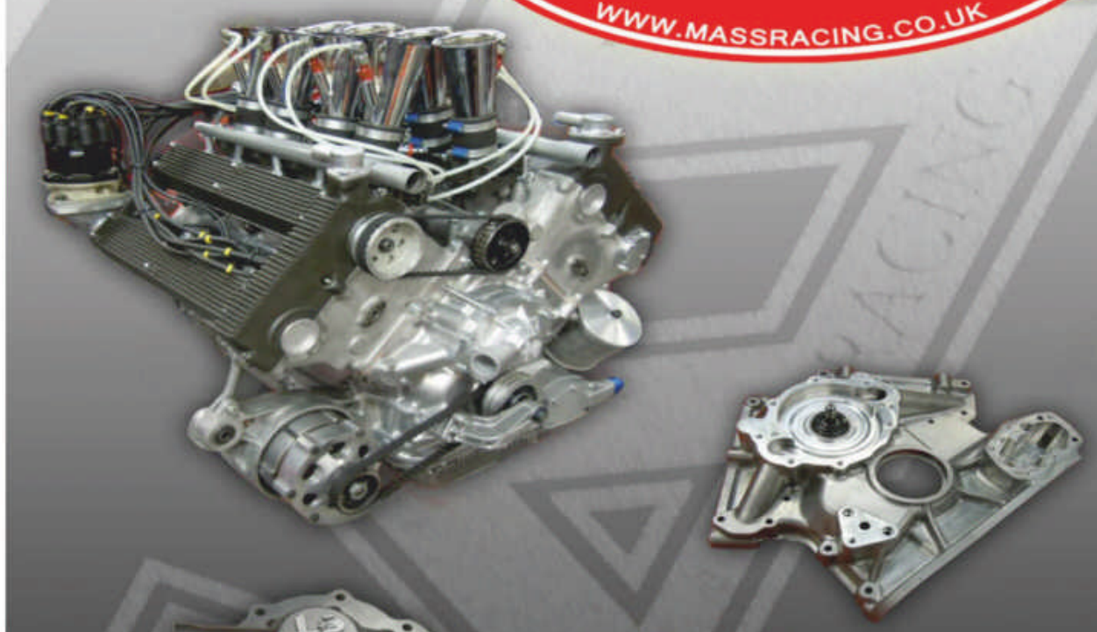

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